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Cover Photo: Paul Haggard\*

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A man with grey hair, wearing a black shirt and dark pinstriped pants, is playing a light blue Yamaha bass guitar. He is standing next to a stack of Hartke amplifiers. The top unit is a Hartke Model 24504 200 Watts amplifier, and the bottom unit is a Hartke LH1000 1000 Watts 4x10" speaker cabinet. The background is a textured orange and red wall.

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*Billy Sheehan*

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# C COMMUNITY

LOWDOWN



BRIAN FOX

## Community Action

**“COMMUNITY” IS A WORD THAT GETS THROWN AROUND A LOT IN THESE** parts—in scintillating strategy meetings, in riveting revenue reports, and in any number of brilliant boardroom brainstormers. But take a look at the section of the magazine that bears the name—and in the pages beyond—and I hope you’ll find it’s more than mere management-speak in the case of BP. Without a doubt, community engagement is the lifeblood of any media outlet hoping to stay relevant amid shifting tides of tweets, pins, posts, blogs, and vlogs.

Luckily for bass players—and BASS PLAYER—we’ve got it good. Anecdotally, just compare the common phrases you’ll find in communities that cater to other instruments—“solo,” “speed,” “shred,” “best”—with the clichés that pop up most in BASS PLAYER: “serve the song,” “meat-and-potatoes,” “bridge the gap.” Sure, there’s no shortage of bassists working to become the faster-than-you, louder-than-you, better-than-you type (and god bless ‘em), but the community is packed mostly by team players who recognize the importance of supporting each other.

At an event like Bass Player LIVE!, that sense of community support is heady and heavy. (More on that in a minute. . . .) When you experience it in person between three absolute monsters in their class, as I was fortunate enough to witness in this month’s cover roundtable with Liam Wilson, Evan Brewer, and Adam “Nolly” Getgood, it’s downright intoxicating. Individually, each of the dudes is worthy of a cover story—Liam, for his 13-year tenure with the Dillinger Escape Plan, one of the most ferocious bands to come out of the progressive metal scene; Evan, as much for his prowess with technical death metal outfit the Faceless as for his forward-thinking, genre-blasting solo efforts; and Nolly, the Periphery bassist whose production expertise and seamless transition from prog-metal guitarist to extend-ranged bassist embodies the virtuosity that characterizes the genre. That much of the conversation—far too epic to print in its entirety—revolved around giving props to players who have had the deepest impact on these three rising stars stands as evidence that we’re all in this together.

On that tip, a bit of news about Bass Player LIVE!, our annual get-together in Los Angeles. Shortly after our last issue went to press, we changed the date of the event to November 9th and 10th, in part to accommodate the schedule of one of this year’s Lifetime Achievement Award winners. By the time this issue hits your hot little hands, we will likely have made an announcement on bassplayer.com and via various social media. Until then, I’m keeping the news close to my chest, absolutely giddy that we’ve snagged bass god G. . . . Nope, not so fast. Think you know who’ll be joining the party? Sound off on Twitter and Facebook. ‘Till next time, keep on digging deeper!

BP Z4!!!  
O—!!



## COURT OF OPINION

## Who'd you like to see on the cover of BASS PLAYER?

Join the conversation at [facebook.com/bassplayermag](https://facebook.com/bassplayermag).



Tal Wilkenfeld! She has great feel and groove, but the only thing I know about the cutest little bass player on the planet is that she started out as a guitar player, but was told she had too much groove *not* to be a bass player. I want more!

—Dean Fiala



Jamareo Artis from Bruno Mars' band, Pino Palladino, or Michael League from Snarky Puppy.

—Kody Killens



Dennis Dunaway. The original Alice Cooper albums would not be nearly as good without his contributions, not to mention his songwriting contributions. —Jim Filicky



Ville Sorvali of Moonsorrow and Marco Hietala of Nightwish.

—Caith Threefires



How about a salute to the bebop bassists of the '50s and '60s such as Paul Chambers, Oscar Pettiford, Doug Watkins, Ray Brown, George Duvivier, Sam Jones, and Scott LaFaro.

We owe them so much; most—if not all—of the licks used today in rock, jazz, and blues can be traced to these cats. —John Rogel



Floyd Pepper, the bass player for the Electric Mayhem band from *The Muppet Show*.

—Kel Pilshaw



Paul Kowert of Punch Brothers, Dennis Crouch, or both in an article on the new breed of roots-music upright players.

—Drew Lawson



Larry Klein. Seriously. He's an unsung hero to the max.

—Roland Wirth



Slick Joe Fick, June Carter's bassist in *Walk the Line*.

—Mike Rodriguez



Matthew Garrison talking about his new album and the work he's doing with Shapeshifter Lab.

—Christopher Amedy



Pete Trewavas. With upcoming Edison's Children and Transatlantic projects—not to mention Marillion—he's certainly got something to say. —Dan Lohrfink



Oh, all right then. I'll do it, but I need crisps for the photo shoot, 'kay?

—Toby Macfarlane

## TIMELINE



- 6TH** Pink Floyd co-founder, composer, and lyricist Roger Waters born, **1944**; Billy Cox accompanies Jimi Hendrix for the last Experience show, **1970**.
- 8TH** Stellar bass work by Wilton Felder helps take Marvin Gaye's "Let's Get It On" to the top of the U.S. charts, **1973**; Bop master and Thelonious Monk sideman Wilbur Ware born, **1923**; New York session legend Will Lee born, **1952**.
- 9TH** The Beatles, with John Lennon on bass, record "Helter Skelter," **1968**; A Taste Of Honey, led by bassist/vocalist Janice-Marie Johnson, rules the charts with "Boogie Oogie Oogie," **1978**; Upright icon George Mraz born, **1944**.
- 12TH** Bob Babbitt's sublime bass line helps Smokey Robinson and the Miracles' "Tears of a Clown" hit the top of the U.K. charts, **1970**.
- 14TH** Mambo godfather Israel "Cachao" Lopez born, **1918**.
- 16TH** "Rapper's Delight," which featured Bernard Edwards' "Good Times" bass line played by Chip Shearin, signals a new era of popularity for hip-hop, **1979**.
- 17TH** Elvis Presley bass man Bill Black born, **1926**.
- 18TH** Punk iconoclast and Ramones songwriter/lyricist Dee Dee Ramone born, **1952**.
- 19TH** Diana Ross's version of "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," armed with a James Jamerson bass line, is No. 1 in the U.S., **1970**.
- 20TH** Jazz man Red Mitchell, known for tuning in 5ths, born, **1927**.
- 21ST** Bass man and vocalist **Slam Stewart** born, **1914**; Jaco Pastorius dies after being beaten by a Florida bouncer, **1987**.
- 22ND** The Band and Rick Danko release their self-titled sophomore album, **1969**.
- 27TH** Jamaican producer and all-time session great Robbie Shakespeare born, **1953**; Metallica's Cliff Burton dies in a bus crash while on tour in Sweden, **1986**.
- 28TH** Former King Crimson bassist Boz Burrell hits No. 1 with Bad Company's self-titled debut, **1974**.
- 29TH** 6-string and slap bass icon Les Claypool born, **1963**.
- 30TH** Bassist, cellist, and composer Oscar Pettiford born, **1922**.





## THE REAL WORLD

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**Effects** None

**Strings** Rotosound Swing Bass  
66

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**Contact** bambokino.com

### How did you come to play bass?

I played keyboards in high school. My band had broken up, and I was bandless. My friend at the musician's union told me a band of older guys was looking for a bassist. He encouraged me to audition. I did, got the gig, and have been playing bass ever since.

### What's a lesson you've learned along the way?

Rejection is part of the deal. Failing isn't a problem; not trying is.

### What are your musical goals?

To not stop trying, to continue writing and recording.



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### FOR MOST OF MY 30-PLUS YEARS OF BASS PLAYING,

I rarely strayed from my trusty 1983 Steinberger. It can play rings around most boutique axes even today, but as you can imagine, the looks from my fellow musicians were getting stranger with each passing decade. Well, I can be glad that my friends nudged me into the 21st century, because there are so many terrific basses out there today that I've happily swung from one extreme to the other. I keep reminding myself that each bass really is different, and of course, they all sound great through my Genz-Benz STL 6.0 210T 2x10 combo.

In the first photo, left to right, are my Rickenbacker 4003, Fender American Deluxe 5-string, Fender American Deluxe, Music Man StingRay HH, Carvin SB-4001, Warwick Corvette \$\$ 6-string, Warwick Corvette \$\$ 5-string, fretless Warwick Corvette \$\$, and Warwick Corvette \$\$\$. In the second photo, from left to right, are my Alembic BBSB4, fretless Breedlove Atlas Solo BJ350/CM4, Spector USA Shorty, Spector NS-4H2-EX, Steinberger L2, and Martin BCPA4.

Thanks to the folks at South Shore Music in Weymouth, Massachusetts, for tracking these beauties down and keeping them in peak condition—I'd never be able to keep up with it on my own, and clearly, now would not be a good time for me to lose the day job! —ERIC DROGIN

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# EXPO







## Satch Whoa!

Bryan Beller snatches Satch's ear at Shepherd's Bush Empire in London, England. After returning from his European jaunt with Joe Satriani, Beller hits the road with the Aristocrats through August in support of that band's latest, *Culture Clash*.

STEPHEN WILLERTON





# BASSNOTES



VINTAGE TROUBLE

JEROME BRUNET

## Rick Barrio Dill Theory Of Devolution

BY JIMMY LESLIE |

**"IN LOS ANGELES IT'S BEST TO HAVE A BROAD** skill set in order to pay the bills," says Rick Barrio Dill. He applied every aspect of his expansive multi-instrumental, vocal, songwriting, and recording know-how to his modern rock outfit 2nd Day Crash until time turned around in 2010. "When Vintage Trouble came together, it was about completely letting go and allowing the music to come from *inside*," Dill continues. "We refer to it as 'devolving.'" Dill, singer Ty Taylor, guitarist Nalle Colt, and drummer Richard Danielson cut bare-bones demos in the style of myriad '50s and '60s rock and R&B heroes. Vintage Trouble's raw soul sound resonated, and soon the group was opening for the Who and doing major festival dates on its own, astounding audiences with an in-the-moment, no-set-list highwire act. We interviewed Dill at Napa Valley's inaugural BottleRock festival after a second-to-none performance.

### **Please elaborate on what "devolving" means to you.**

It means stripping everything down, other than dressing up, which we do out of respect. Having no effect pedals challenges me to manipulate my bass tone to achieve various sounds. I dig P-Basses because you can't get any simpler than two knobs—volume and tone. I even wire my Jazz Bases like that. I'll roll back the tone control just enough to cop an old-school feel on a 6/8 ballad like "Gracefully," and run it wide

open for maximum bite on a rocker like "Blues Hand Me Down."

### **How does playing in such a lean soul band affect your mentality on bass?**

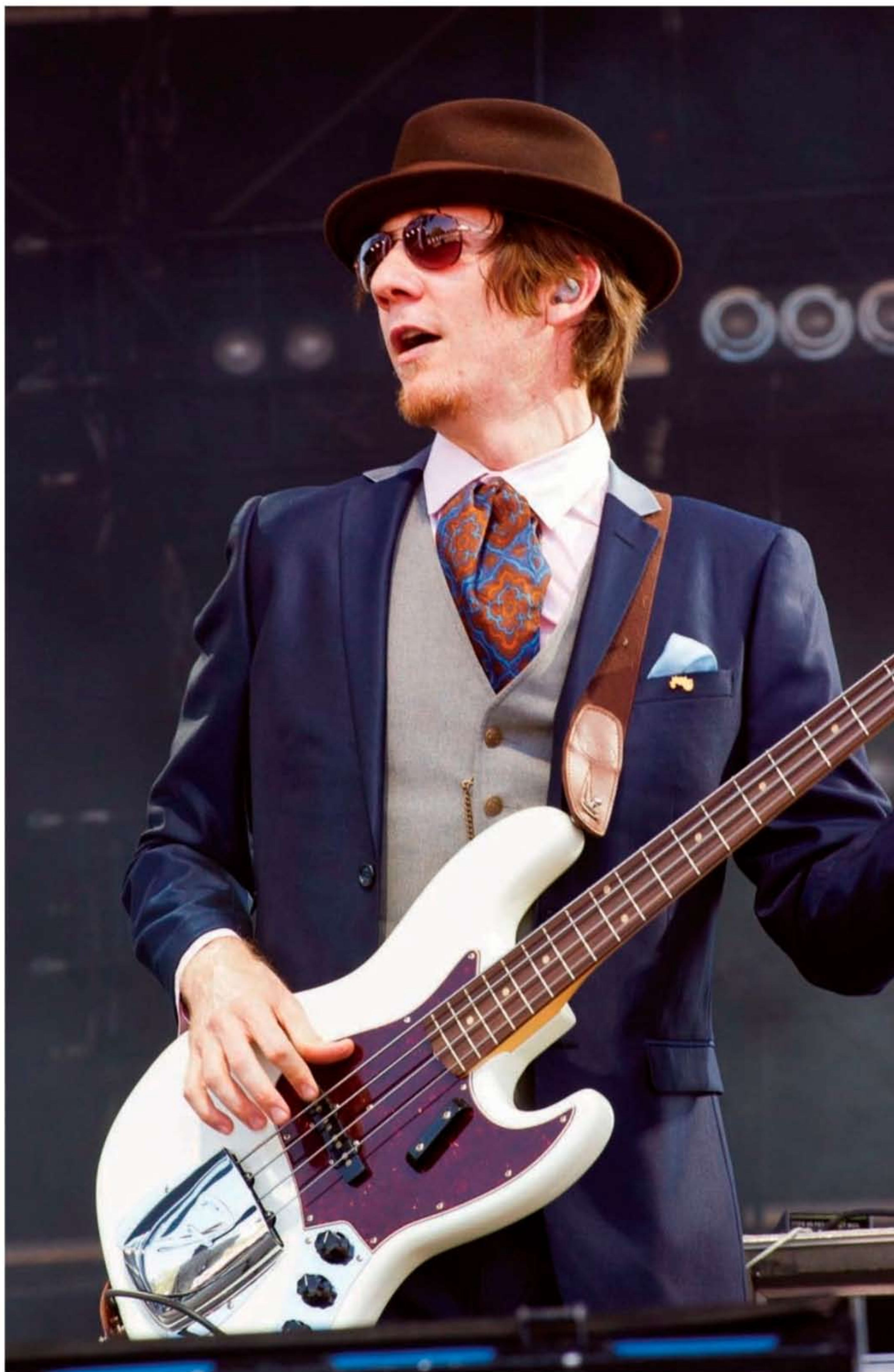
I often think like a rhythm guitarist or a string player. "Nancy Lee" is a standard dirty blues, and a lot of what makes it pop is how I dance along with, and in-between with, Richard's drum rhythm. I play with the kick for the important parts, and then play against it like a rhythm guitar player on the upbeats during other parts, to create a push-and-pull volatility.

The crescendo that sets up the guitar solo on "Run Outta You" is a good example where there could be strings, so I play like a cello player with a big, legato vibrato. When we were in the studio writing "Not Alright by Me," I put a lot of thought into playing like a cello player for the part that goes high up on the neck, figuring that would be a beautiful way to make it speak against Nalle's beautiful guitar.

### **Vintage Trouble really comes alive as a group onstage.**

We had been a band for only three months when we cut the record. I used a P-Bass, and a Fender Marcus Miller Jazz Bass wired like a P-Bass and loaded with Aguilar pickups, through an old Ampeg B-15 fliptop. We literally stood around in a circle and did all full takes, with no click track, in just two-and-a-half days. So when I talk about "devolving," I really mean it. Vintage Trouble is as stripped down and simplified as it can be. **BP**





## *i* INFO

### LISTEN



Vintage Trouble, *The Bomb Shelter Sessions*  
[Vintage Trouble, 2011]

**Basses** Fender American Vintage '64 Jazz Bass, Fender American Vintage '57 Precision Bass (with Aguilar pickups)  
**Strings** D'Addario Chromes flatwounds (.045-.105)

**Rig** Aguilar DB 751 head with Aguilar DB 410 & DB 115 cabinets



**Approach** "Smaller is bigger on club shows. I shave the 40Hz-60Hz frequencies for a snotty tone that sits on top of Rich's huge bass drum sound. I kick more low end on arena gigs because I need to feel those frequencies onstage."

### CONNECT

Watch Rick Barrio Dill get down on "Nancy Lee" with Vintage Trouble on *Later With Jools Holland*.  
[bassplayer.com/september2013](http://bassplayer.com/september2013)





QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE

# Michael Shuman King Of Queens

BY JON D'AURIA |

**WHEN QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE ENTERED** the studio for their sixth studio album, Michael Shuman put expectations aside to go with the flow of his more seasoned bandmates. Shuman's aggressive and thoughtful playing supplies the backbone to the manic desert-rock record, ... *Like Clockwork*. What he didn't expect was that the process would mark the end of drummer Joey Castillo's 11-year tenure with the band, or that the ensuing sessions would bring forth collaborations with Trent Reznor, Dave Grohl, and Sir Elton John.

"It was definitely a learning experience for me on how they work together, but it was a difficult record to make for everyone. We gave it a first try, and because of different circumstances, we took a break and reconvened. Then it all seemed to click." And click it did. Shuman's powerful lines on "My God Is the Sun" and "I Sat by the Ocean" solidify his role in the lineup, while demonstrating his melodic interplay with Josh Homme's and Troy Van Leeuwen's guitars.

## What was the writing process like for this album?

It's great because there isn't an ego problem; the best idea always wins. For "If I Had a Tail," for example, Josh brought the idea in the morning, we worked out an arrangement in the afternoon, recorded it all in the evening, and then he put vocals on late that night and we were done. But some ideas took a long time for us to figure out their identity.

## That's a tight bass groove on "I Appear Missing."

We worked out that song in the early stages, but I wasn't

thrilled with my part. Then Dave Grohl came in to take over the sessions after Joey departed, and it all changed. The groove throughout the song just came together when we started playing. It has somewhat of a goth-dub feel that I love, because I'm a big Bauhaus fan.

## How was it working with Grohl and your new drummer, Jon Theodore from the Mars Volta?

I grew up listening to those guys, and I'm a huge fan of their drumming. Playing with Joey for so long really locked us in together, and it's hard to walk away from that situation. Whether it's good or bad, it's refreshing to play with new drummers. It makes you explore and approach things in a new way. I catch myself playing totally differently with Jon.

## How do you create your tone?

It changes from song to song. On "The Vampyre of Time and Memory," I used more of a Paul McCartney feel; I plucked the line and used flatwounds strings on a hollow-body bass. My dream rig is an Ampeg SVT, 8x10 cabinet, and an Acoustic 360, but when you go into the studio it's not logical to use a rig like that. So we use a lot of vintage combo amps to get better frequencies.

## You play many different instruments. What's your attraction to bass?

I started on guitar when I was seven, and at 14 I started a band. I felt like bass players got a bad rap, so I wanted to become a bass player who was creative and the best at what I did—I didn't want to be just another bass player. Being part of the group is so important, and being part of the backbone makes it more exciting for me. **BP**

## i INFO

LISTEN



Queens of the Stone Age, ... *Like Clockwork* [Matador, 2013]

EQUIP

**Basses** Fender American Vintage 1963 Jazz Bass, Fender American Vintage 1952 Precision Bass, 1967 Gibson EB2



**Rig** Fender Bassman 300 Pro, Fender 810 Pro V2 8x10 Fender 115 Pro 1x15

**Effects** Way Huge Angry Troll boost, Way Huge Swollen Pickle fuzz

**Synth** Moog Little Phatty





Adam Nitti  
Solo artist

Jett Beres  
Sister Hazel

Brandon Leitru  
For Today

Matt DeVries  
Fear Factory

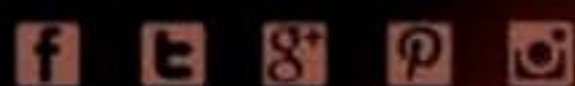
Chris Tilley  
The Contortionist

## The Legendary Soundgear. Comfortable In Any Genre...**EXTREMELY** Comfortable.

The Ibanez bass designers are always looking for a way to give the extremely comfortable SR their own touch. Here's an excellent example:

The new SR800 (and 5-string version SR805) with its poplar burl-topped body, epitomizes Ibanez expert luthiery by leveraging nature's beauty, and featuring high-end appointments, like the breathtaking tone palette that results from the combination of Bartolini® MK-1 pickups and an EQB-III 3-band EQ with mid frequency select switch. Try one out and you may find that great bass tone doesn't need to be a pain in the neck... or shoulder... or back.

# Ibanez







FALL OUT BOY

## Pete Wentz After The Fall

BY JON D'AURIA

**AFTER A LONG AND TURBULENT RISE TO** undeniable success, capsized by controversy and a broken public image, Pete Wentz announced in 2009 that Fall Out Boy was going on indefinite hiatus, while stating that he believed "the world needed a little less Pete Wentz." Fans were heartbroken, naysayers smirked in contempt, and for a moment, the Chicago-based alternative-pop quartet that had been making so much noise fell silent.

After four years of separation full of obscure side projects, unsuccessful solo efforts, and the healing of old wounds, the Fall Out Boy members decided they needed to create driven music once again, and that they needed each other to do it. And with a new chapter and forgotten past, the new Pete Wentz emerged.

Wentz's playing on *Save Rock and Roll*, the band's fifth full-length CD, stretches beyond his comfort zone of eighth-note picking, as he takes rhythmic risks and explores new tones. The album as a whole plays more pop than punk; "Where Did the Party Go" even illustrates Wentz's appreciation of funk grooves. This fearless return has put Fall Out Boy back at the top of the charts, as a redefined Pete Wentz proves that a lot can be accomplished when you have nothing to lose.

### What was it like when you first stepped in a room together after your hiatus?

The first time we rehearsed again, we sounded a bit like a bad cover band. But once we got onstage together it all clicked and felt really natural. None of us knew if we'd ever play together again, so it was just so good to be back working with the boys.

### Did it feel natural to get back in the studio?

Definitely. It was similar to our previous albums, where I wrote the lyrics and Patrick and the guys put together some ideas and we'd jam it all together as a band. [Producer] Butch Walker really helped guide the album. We had been a bit of a "kitchen sink" band where we'd layer tracks upon tracks in the studio. He said to us right off the bat that if we wanted to make the most important Fall Out Boy album, and we're going to call it *Save Rock and Roll*, we need to do it right.



### Describe the role of bass in your music.

It's a balance of when it's your time to shine and when you're playing the supporting role, because you're a working part of the art. This time I really understood that the bass needed to be part of the rhythm section and that I needed to home in with Andy and lay a big foundation, though I did explore a bit.

### How much bass did you play during the band's hiatus?

I didn't play as much as I wanted to. I was working on other music, so I knew I had to get back into my playing before we even began to approach a comeback. I started playing a ton with a metronome and working on my technique. My picking was my main focus of my practice. So much of it is about my right hand and how it controls my tone.

### You get the public attention and have the demeanor of a frontman, yet you chose to be a bassist.

Growing up, bassists were always my favorite guys in the band. I used to watch Jason Newsted headbang during Metallica shows, and I always wanted to be that guy. We grew up in the suburbs of Chicago where everyone played guitar, a couple people played drums, and no one played bass. So I was always in bands. Really, in music, bass is the sexiest thing going on.

### What can we expect from your next Squier custom bass series?

We're looking to go into production this fall or winter. The tone knob and the volume knob will be separated and the look will change drastically. I also want to use a heavier wood and new pickups. It's important that my basses are part of the Squier series so that anyone can buy one and play it. You shouldn't have to spend a fortune to get a good-sounding bass, especially when you're first starting out. **BP**

## i INFO

LISTEN



Fall Out Boy, *Save Rock and Roll*  
[Island, 2013]

EQUIP

**Bass** Squier Pete Wentz Signature Precision Bass, Fender Custom Michael Jordan Precision Bass  
**Strings** Dean Markley Heavy Gauge  
**Rig** Orange AB200 head, Fender 810 Pro V2 cabinet  
**Effects** Tech 21 SansAmp Bass Driver DI, Electro-Harmonix Big Muff







**Johnny Christ**  
Avenged Sevenfold

2001RB  
410RBH







TED NUGENT, ALICE COOPER, RAINBOW

## Greg Smith

### Nuge Nudging

BY FREDDY VILLANO |

#### FROM HIS FIRST PROFESSIONAL GIG IN 1983—

with late Plasmatics frontwoman Wendy O. Williams—to his recent stint playing bass for Billy Joel at the 12/12/12 Hurricane Sandy Relief Concert, Greg Smith has epitomized the term “working musician.” Over the past 30 years, he’s played bass for Alice Cooper, Rainbow, Dokken, and Blue Öyster Cult, and he even squeezed in a four-year run as the bassist in the Billy Joel/Twyla Tharp Broadway musical *Movin’ Out*. His rock-solid playing, high tenor vocals, and encyclopedic knowledge of contemporary rock songs—all honed in Long Island’s once-fertile cover-band scene—keep him thoroughly employed. We talked to Smith the day before he hit the road with his current boss, Ted Nugent, on the Midwest Rock ‘N Roll Express tour with Styx and REO Speedwagon.

#### Did you have to read for the *Movin’ Out* gig?

There was no reading involved at all. When the thing started, we’d get together with Twyla Tharp and the music coordinator, and she’d say, “I’m thinking about these songs.” We’d learn them off the records, and then she’d change stuff around. We created it on-the-spot.

#### How did singing become one of your strong suits?

Many years ago I was afraid of the microphone—I never really knew I could sing. I was playing in a band called Devias, and the singer would say, “You can hit that note. That’s a B—that’s easy.” I didn’t know if a B was high or not; I just went, “Okay.” He encouraged me, and as I did it, I gained more confidence. Singing is 80 percent confidence, anyway. You have to have the nuts to just get up there and blurt it out. At first the playing and singing aspect was really difficult, because you have to split your brain. After a while it becomes second nature.

**Ritchie Blackmore has historically preferred bassists who play with a pick. How did you accommodate him, being predominantly a fingerstyle player?**

I’m not a very good pick player. I learned with my

Ted Nugent with Smith



BROWN PHOTOGRAPHY

fingers, and I don’t have much experience using a pick at all. With Blackmore I ended up growing out my fingernails just a bit and angling them to get that pointed sound he likes. He was happy with that. On this latest tour, though, Nugent was like, “‘Stranglehold’ with a pick, right?” I said, “Whatever you want, boss.”

#### You’ve played with some great drummers. Who has challenged you in a different way?

Jonathan Mover [GTR, Joe Satriani] had a band called Einstein a while back, and I was the bass player when it first started. That was the only band I’ve ever been in where I actually had to count and try not to pay attention to him. He played such intricate stuff that if I got caught up in listening to him, I’d get lost. So if it was in 7/8, I had to count 1–2–3–4–5–6–7 and let him do his thing. Experiences like that make you a better player.

#### You’ve played some iconic songs live throughout your career. Do you stick to the bass lines on the records?

When I get a gig like that, I listen to what the current band has been doing. Then I go back to the original and meld the two, inserting a little of myself into the mix. I thought the bass solo in “Stranglehold” was a do-your-own-thing part, but when I joined the band, Ted was like, “No, man, you have to play that exact part.” But for the rest of the stuff I do what I please. He really digs improvisation; you never know when Ted’s going to do a Jimi Hendrix song. Blackmore was the same way, too—he’d just bust into a Hendrix song. You just have to hope it’s one you know! **BP**

### i INFO

**Basses** 1972 Fender Precision Bass, three Fender ‘57 Reissue Precision Bases

**Pickups** EMG

**Rig** Hartke LH1000 head, Hartke Hydrive 8x10 cabinets

**Strings** Ernie Ball Slinky (.045–.105)

**Accessories**

Zoom

B3 Bass

Effects,

Hip-

shot Bass

Xtenders, Dream Earz

In-Ear Monitors, Shure

Wireless

EQUIP



CONNECT



Check out Greg singing lead on the Ted Nugent classic “Just What the Doctor Ordered.”

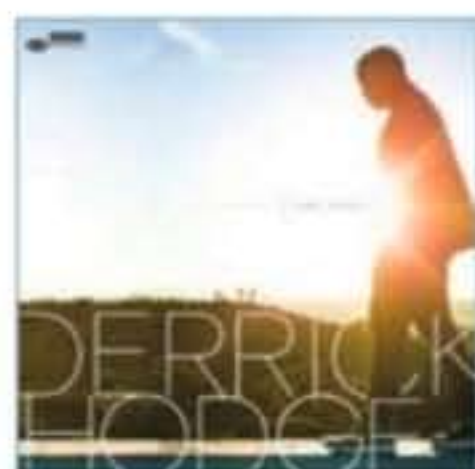
[bassplayer.com/september2013](http://bassplayer.com/september2013)



## BP RECOMMENDS



Derrick Hodge

**DERRICK HODGE****LIVE TODAY** [Blue Note]

This multi-layered debut burns with quiet intensity and a soulful, mature mix of modern R&B and jazz flavors. **Derrick Hodge**, perhaps best known for nimbly anchoring the Robert Glasper Experiment, is also a tasteful composer, producer, and arranger who orchestrates ace performances from a diverse cast that includes rapper Common, his Experiment bandmates, rising horn stars Marcus Strickland and Keyon Herrold, veteran producer/keyboardist James Poyser, and the American String Quartet. Fans of Hodge's work with Glasper will find plenty to love here, but *Live Today* also alludes to his gospel and marching-band backgrounds, as well as the influence of mentors Terence Blanchard and Mulgrew Miller. Highly recommended. —E.E. BRADMAN

**DAFT PUNK****RANDOM ACCESS MEMORIES** [Columbia]

The Parisian dance duo's much-anticipated first studio CD since 2005 was five years, three cities, and a million-plus dollars in the making, and has the biggest streaming single in history ("Get Lucky", which reached No. 1 in 65 countries). What has musicians excited, however, is the pair's choice to (mostly) eschew machines and call in groove greats and session aces to throw down and throw back. Indeed, the aptly titled opener, "Give Life Back to Music," boasts a **James Genus**/Omar Hakim-spun disco bounce infused by the guitar brilliance of Nile Rogers and Paul Jackson Jr. Minus Nile, Genus stretches deep into "Giorgio by Moroder" (narrated by the disco legend himself). Producer Pharrell Williams fronts "Lose Yourself to Dance" and "Get Lucky," both anchored by J.R. Robinson and **Nathan East**, who—with Nile onboard—does the late, great Bernard Edwards proud via his in-the-cracks

pickups, octaves, and hammers, especially on "Lucky." Genus and Hakim step back into the driver's seat for "Beyond" (inspired by Michael McDonald's "I Keep Forgettin'"), with Genus recalling that track's Louis Johnson fills), "Motherboard" (dig James's exposed muting and sliding, early on), and "Fragments of Time" (nice double-time section, cats!). The rub? Inside word is some of these tunes were cut with both rhythm sections, fed into a computer, and edited to include both teams' contributions per track. Regardless, this CD can go a long way toward revitalizing the human touch between man and machine in contemporary music. —CHRIS JISI

**MEGADETH****SUPER COLLIDER** [Universal]

Right from the opening track of their 14th album, the veteran rockers of Megadeth sound young and hungry, and **Dave Ellefson**'s charging bass sets the tone for a record that is equal parts thrash metal and heavy rock. Fans of Ellefson will rejoice at the way he digs into the pocket on speed-hungry songs like "Built For War," sounding just like the Ellefson of yore. —JON D'AURIA

**THE ARISTOCRATS****CULTURE CLASH** [Boing]

Oh, that all modern instrumental music was this soulful and interesting. As the title hints, stepping across stylistic boundaries is what **Bryan Beller**, Guthrie Govan, and Marco Minnemann aim to do, and their pursuit of no-holds barred fun—as well as their virtuosic command of their instruments—is a blast to hear. The chops are fierce, the tones are primo (check out Beller on

CONTINUED





"Ohhhh Nooo"), and the moods cover the spectrum, from groovy to menacing to playful to thrashing to introspective. Highlights include the arpeggiator-like 16ths on "Dance of the Aristocrats" and the "Bright Size Life"-ready bass solo in "Gaping Head Wound." —E.E. BRADMAN



**JOHN SCOFIELD**  
**ÜBERJAM DEUX** [Emarcy Decca]

Eleven years after his groundbreaking *Überjam* CD (with Jesse Murphy on bass), guitar force Scofield re-partners with most of the original band—rhythm guitar and sampling ace Avi Bortnick, drummer Adam Dietch, and keyboardist John Medeski—while introducing a new rhythm-section partner (Marcus Miller drummer Louis Cato) for Scofield vet and ex-Gov't Mule bassist **Andy Hess**. Thanks to a focus on global dance grooves, this masterwork grooves even harder than its predecessor. The Afrobeat opener "Camelus" sets the table, with Hess departing his Fela/James Brown-like ostinato only for brief, tasteful variations. "Endless Summer" launches with a mechanized Top 40/club-worthy pulse only to lay a gorgeous jazz head and bridge over top. "Cracked Ice" is all Avi rhythm bluster, with Hess morphing his 16th-based part into an octaver-driven subterranean throwdown. "Al Green Song" and "Curtis New" draw brilliantly from "Love and Happiness" and "Move On Up," respectively. "Snake Dance" is a slithering, Afrobeat highpoint, capped by Sco's meter-changing bridge and Hess's gradually developing, off-the-downbeat line. Groove playing as high art. —CHRIS JISI



**FILTER**  
**THE SUN COMES OUT TONIGHT** [Wind-Up]

As Filter journeys into the realm of heavy industrial, its latest album flaunts a darker, post-grunge version of the sound that has been attracting fans since 1995's "Hey Man Nice Shot." **Phil Buckman**, taking advantage of the group's experimentation with dropped tunings, creates a formidable wall of sound; while there's no shortage of low end on the softer songs, Buckman shows his melodic skills on "Surprise" and "It's Just You." —JON D'AURIA



**JUDAS PRIEST**  
**EPITAPH** [Sony Music Entertainment]

Don't let the title fool you—this live concert DVD proves that Judas Priest is not only still alive but is also still kicking ass. Representing 14 releases from 1974 to 2008, this 23-song retrospective proves the band is as relevant as its legacy is rich. Founding bassist **Ian Hill** knows his role in the band: thicken the guitar riffs to make them heavier, and hold down the ground artillery while the guitar solos go airborne. Newcomer Richie Faulkner, replacing retired guitarist K.K. Downing, adds youthful fire that encourages veteran co-guitarist Glenn Tipton to step up his game. Scott Travis expertly blends old- and new-school metal drumming to accompany the repertoire's stylistic evolution, and frontman Rob Halford

defies metal vocalist statistics by improving with age. *Epitaph* stands as an awesome monument to classic British heavy metal. —CAITH THREEFIRES



**LUNASA**  
**LUNASA WITH THE RTE CONCERT ORCHESTRA** [Lunasa]

When traditional music embarks on the seemingly inevitable orchestral collaboration, direction is everything; the defining nuances and characteristics risk being subverted and washed out by a wave of symphonic grandeur. Not so with this beautifully arranged live offering from Irish acoustic group Lunasa. It's as if the orchestra were led by the band on a stroll through the Emerald Isle countryside, rather than the band becoming a Celtic ornament in the concert hall. **Trevor Hutchinson's** bowed and plucked double bass not only expands the range and depth of the ensemble's sound, but it also serves as a sonic and symbolic pivot point between the two genres. A flawless and moving performance. —CAITH THREEFIRES



**VAMPIRE WEEKEND**  
**MODERN VAMPIRES OF THE CITY** [XL]

The quartet of Columbia alumni continues to mature, trading Afrobeat flavors for indie ballads and introspective '70s-style songwriting. **Chris Baio** supports the proceedings with a Rickenbacker 4003 and an Eminence electric upright, bellowing on the melancholic track "Hudson" and bringing his trademark fast plucking, muted style to "Diane Young" and "Finger Back." —JON D'AURIA



**KING KHAN & THE SHRINES**  
**IDLE NO MORE** [Merge]

Just in case you thought there wasn't an indie psych resurgence in full flower (so to speak), Montreal's King Khan emerges once again from the wayback machine. *Idle No More* ranges from garage rock to greasy proto-funk, with **Jeans Redemann** showing he can turn on a dime from downright McCartney-esque ("Born to Die" taps the classic Höfner sound of the Beatles' "Paperback Writer") to soul-stung (for the raucous groove of "Luckiest Man," think Archie Bell's "Tighten Up"). Khan's profoundly melodic ear informs the whole set, but in the (low) end, rhythm is king. —BILL MURPHY



**PORTUGAL THE MAN**  
**EVIL FRIENDS** [Atlantic]

On their seventh album, **Zach Carothers** and bandmates enlisted producer Danger Mouse to help them orchestrate a sound that's as diverse and extreme as the Alaskan frontier the band calls home. Whether playing fingerstyle or with a pick, Carother's tone is eclectic and perfectly raw; over the course of an album that features effect-laden gems such as "Hip-Hop Kids," "Atomic Man," and "Evil Friends," Carother's lines veer from grooving to melodic to eccentrically driving. —JON D'AURIA **BP**



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## NEW GEAR

**GRIFFIN TECHNOLOGY****StudioConnect with Lightning**

With its stereo audio, MIDI in/out, and charging dock, the StudioConnect, an all-in-one audio interface for the iPad, makes it easy to plug in and jam along with whatever's on your iPad. It also features line-level RCA stereo output and stereo headphone output with separate volume control, and it allows players to plug a recorder or mixer into StudioConnect's stereo 3.5mm input jack and connect the whole band to a single iPad.

**Street** \$150

**Contact** griffintechnology.com

**EXPANDING HANDS MUSIC****Funk Fingers**

Remember the right-hand extension Funk Fingers Tony Levin used so skillfully with Peter Gabriel? With Levin's blessing, Expanding Hands Music now offers both original Funk Fingers and a "Red Type" version with a bit more weight at the tip for players who want more control and a heavier attack.

**Street** Original, \$22; Red Type, \$26

**Contact** expandinghandsmusic.com

**JAMUP****Pro XT 2.4 for iOS**

Players who love to jam along with their Apple products should check out the JamUp 2.4 Guitar/Bass iPad and iPhone Amp-Effect Processor. Available at the iTunes App Store, the latest update packs a host of extra onboard bells and whistles, and JamUp now offers the proprietary ToneSharing platform, allowing you to explore, share, and download over 5,000 artist and user presets.

**Street** \$19.99; \$9.99 (Bass Expansion Pack II)

**Contact** positivegrid.com

**CREATION AUDIO LABS****Funkulator EQ and Grizzly Bass Overdrive/Distortion pedals**

With a single EQ knob that controls a variable upper-mid frequency scoop while gently boosting the highs and lows, Creation Audio Labs' new Funkulator is a bass EQ pedal aimed at old-school funksters. The Grizzly Bass, on the other hand, helps players aching to get tube-amp overdrive and distortion. Controls include gain, overdrive, distortion, high-cut, and a "Funkulator" curve that controls a variable upper-mid frequency scoop while gently boosting the highs and lows.

**Price** Funkulator, \$149; Grizzly Bass, \$225

**Contact** creationaudiolabs.com



## G&L GUITARS

### Savannah Collection ASAT Bass

This very limited-edition 4-string, made of semi-hollow okoume with a korina top, boasts a maple neck, a pau ferro fingerboard, medium jumbo frets, custom G&L Ultra-Lite tuners, and a G&L saddle-lock bridge with chrome-plated brass saddles. The active/passive electronics, 3-way mini-toggle pickup selector, series/parallel mini-toggle, pre-amp control mini-toggle (off/on/on with high-end EQ boost) complete the package. Comes with a deluxe hardshell tolex case.

**Street** \$1,650

**Contact** [glguitars.com](http://glguitars.com)



## IRON ETHER

### Subterranea

Looking for a multi-timbral analog synthesizer and octave pedal? You're in luck. The Subterranea features three synthesized voices, selectable waveforms, and a low-pass filter. Besides level controls for its main octave, octave synth, and unison synth voices, the pedal boasts 3-way switches to allow players to select between sawtooth, narrow-pulse, and square waveforms and a host of options for knob-twiddlers who are ready to mess with filter controls and filters.

**Street** \$225

**Contact** [ironether.com](http://ironether.com)



## JULE AMPS

### Monique Bass Preamp

This handmade, all-tube tube preamp sports a 3-band EQ, plus controls for a line level 1/4" output, an XLR balanced DI output driven by a Cinemag transformer, and input sensitivity that handles both passive and active pickups. The push-pull sensitivity and line level knobs are capable of a 4db gain increase. The line level output goes directly to the input jack of an amplifier, but its 10KΩ output impedance also connects to an effects loop, a power amp input, or a line input jack. Monique is available in a bamboo cabinet, in an all-steel "dove cage," in a two-space 19" rack, in a desktop model, and bundled with an 800-watt Demeter Minnie D power amp.

**Street** Rackmount and desktop, \$1,185; caged, \$1,300; bamboo, \$1,800; with Demeter power amp, \$2,035

**Contact** [juleamp.com](http://juleamp.com)

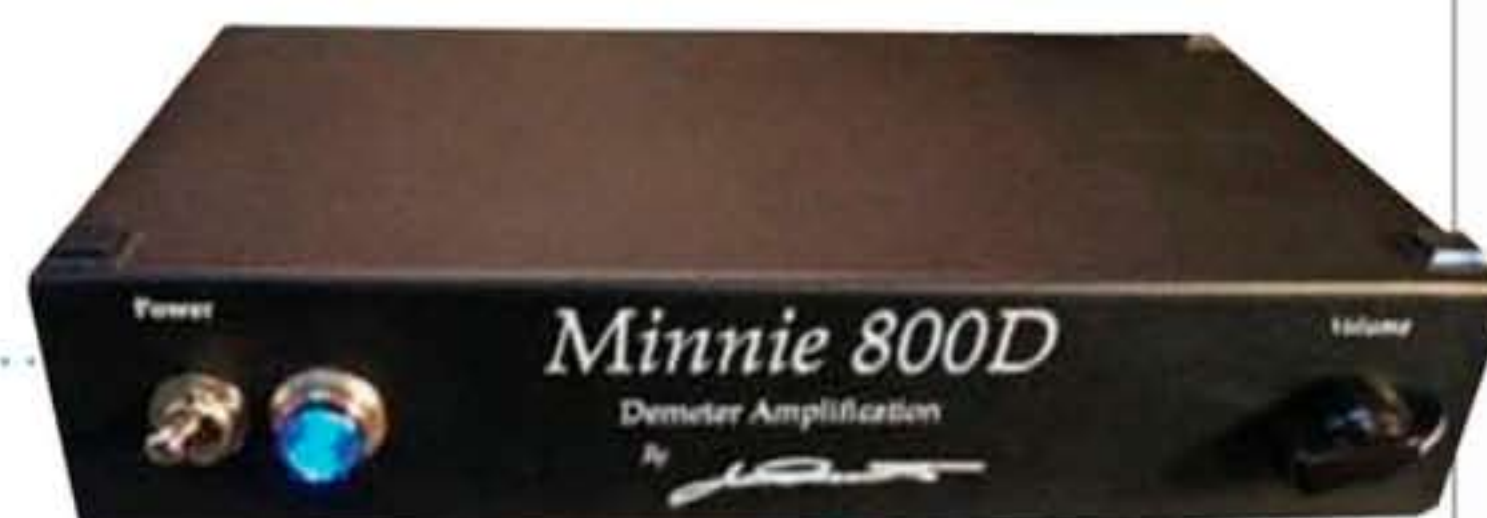


Bamboo cabinet

All-steel "dove cage"



Two-space 19" rack



Demeter Minnie 800D power amp





Clockwise from left: Evan Brewer, Liam Wilson,  
and Adam "Nolly" Getgood.



# FUTURE PROGRESSIVE

LIAM WILSON, EVAN BREWER  
& ADAM “NOLLY” GETGOOD

DISCUSS THE TONES, TECHNIQUES, AND SURVIVAL TACTICS OF  
EXTREME MODERN METAL

BY BRIAN FOX

## **THE SPEED, DYNAMICS, SONIC TEXTURES, AND POLYRHYTHMS OF PROGRESSIVE METAL**

impose almost terrifying physical and conceptual pressures on bassists. You almost have to negotiate several intense applications of technique at once, all while putting on a powerful show, and, hopefully, saving your body and arm muscles from harm.

If you want to better understand how bassists can endure such craziness, as well as how they apply their creativity, gear, and technical gifts to keep the intensity flowing, *BP* has assembled three of prog metal's most visible and respected bassists for a revealing roundtable interview. In addition to a burgeoning solo career, Evan Brewer plays with technical death metal outfit the Faceless, Adam “Nolly” Getgood is a member of Maryland's Periphery, and Liam Wilson manages the manic attack of the Dillinger Escape Plan.





Evan Brewer with his  
Warwick Infinity 5-string.



**First off, playing progressive metal, technical death metal, mathcore, or any related genre involves physical challenges in terms of technique. What is your approach to bass in that regard?**

**ADAM "NOLLY" GETGOOD** I just practice like a madman. I was very aware of the technique—especially on guitar—picking just from the wrist and keeping a consistent technique. A lot of people will practice slow, but they'll use completely different technique when they speed up. They're not really preparing themselves for speed. I'm very conscientious about how my technique worked at a fast speed, and I try to slow that right down and practice it that way. So there was no real change in technique no matter how fast I played—up to a point, of course. Maybe I've just been lucky, but I haven't encountered any kind of tendonitis, even playing with a 37"-scale bass.

**EVAN BREWER** When you're growing into something that has a physical aspect to it, there's going to be some natural muscle growth, like healthy soreness. I've experienced gradual stuff like that, and it feels okay. I let my body steer me. One thing that has largely saved me from a repetitive-motion type injury is that I play with a lot of different techniques. It's kind of like working out—you have leg day, chest day, cardio, whatever. If I wear out fingerstyle one night, I'll do thumb for a while. When I was first getting into using my thumb, like a pick, the skin on my thumb would get sore, so then I'd go back to fingers. Then I'd work on my economy picking with an actual pick. By changing it up and having options, I've avoided the repetitive motion of just use one right-hand technique.

As I've evolved as a player, my right hand has turned into a meld of all those techniques where I'm not even fully aware that I'm doing thumb or fingers. I think that lightens the load across the board from the exact repeated motions. On the left hand, the only thing I would say that I've done is just try to be aware of my action, because the left hand is essentially doing the exact same thing all the time. You're not really going to get around that, unless you want to play overhand a little, which sometimes I even do just to give my wrist a rest for a second. But becoming aware of my action, my string tension, and learning how to adjust my own truss rod and monitor that has helped. It used to be when I went on a tour and my action got all

high and I wouldn't know how to fix it, and I would just roll with it and it would start to hurt my hand.

**LIAM WILSON** I've found that if I'm having a problem nailing a part, nine times out of ten, it ends up being because I'm holding my breath. If you're gasping for air, you instinctually go into fight-or-flight mode, and you tense up. I find that breathing right gives my phrasing more life. It's more lyrical if I'm paying attention to my breathing. It's about tuning in to the subtleties of your body and noticing how much of an effect it has.

**EB** That's completely huge. It took me ten years of not being able to execute on stage the things I could execute at home, and it wasn't nervousness. I was holding my breath, and I wasn't giving my muscles the oxygen they needed to function properly.

I also didn't have my strap height set. Once I figured out that if I set my strap height approximately where my bass is when I'm sitting, all that practice starts to be functional. I was putting my muscles into a position that they weren't in when I was practicing because I wasn't practicing standing up jumping around in my room. It took me a decade to even figure out those two simple things.

**LW** When recording, I have to stand up. I'm not going to get the same thing when I'm sitting. It makes a huge difference in how I play.

Also, any time I'll look for info about playing bass with a pick, I come up empty handed; it's all about guitar picking. I know that a lot of it comes from the wrist, but I feel there's a lot in your shoulder, as well. Think about the Moeller drum technique—it's almost like a whip. I really feel like my arm is the same way. If I have the energy just coming from my wrist, I have only so much energy to work with. But if it's coming all the way from up the shoulder, I've got that much more. It's almost like a martial arts technique. You can throw a punch from close range and knock somebody out if you've got the Chi right. It's a whole-body thing; it starts in my feet for me.

**NG** I'll definitely concur with the picking thing. I go to guitar and my technique is very wrist-based. On the bass, it's not. On guitar I'll rest my palm on the bridge. On bass, I won't do that. My hand is always floating above it, and that's when you start to get more of the elbow. I do this also for the sake of muting, because when you're playing with a lot of gain you're getting a lot of string noise.

**What are the main basses you use on tour and in the studio?**

## “BREATHING RIGHT GIVES MY PHRASING MORE LIFE.” — LIAM WILSON

**EB** My bass with the Faceless is a Warwick 4-string Streamer Stage I. It's a production-model bass I found in New York at Warwick's Custom Shop. I went through almost every bass there, playing just Faceless bass lines, because there's a sound I have in my head for them. I was choosing purely with my ears. I recently swapped out the stock M.E.C. pickups to EMGs.

**What do you prefer about the EMGs?**

**EB** The highs from the M.E.C. preamp are voiced too high for my preference.

On the EMG, there are two DIP switches to select the high frequency, and I choose the lower of the two. But I picked the bass for what it sounded like flat. I hardly ever boost or cut anything on the EQ. But when my strings start to die, I might boost the highs a little. Also, the Variable Mid Control from EMG gives you the options because it's a filter so you can control the frequency you're cutting or boosting within a set parameter. If I boost my mids, it's usually way back to the lowest mid-range setting or maybe just a little up from there. I'm big on the magic midrange. That's where we need to sit to cut through effortlessly and not have it be a volume war.

**LW** Zon Guitars made me two Sonus basses, and I favored the one with the most P-like growl. Our producer [Steve Evetts] also has an early Specator bass that I used a lot. It's a neck-through with a P/J pickup combo.

**NG** I use a Dingwall. It has fanned frets and a 37" scale, which is cool. The three-pickup thing isn't as crazy as it looks. There's quite a lot of distance





Nolly Getgood with  
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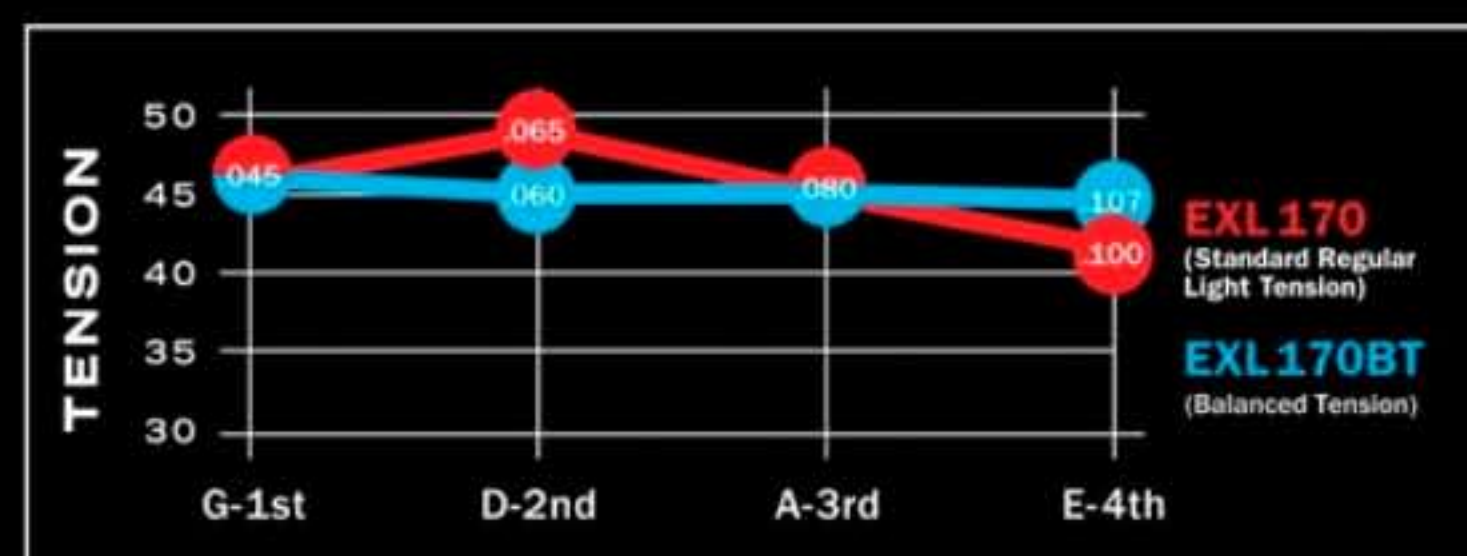


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between the neck and the start of the frets, but it's cool because you can have the bridge and neck together in parallel for a kind of jazz sound, but you can also have the bridge and middle in series, which sounds huge.

**So how did you come to play a fanned-fret bass?**

**NG** Actually, the first tour I ever did with Periphery was back in 2009, and although I hadn't got much experience playing bass at all, I was filling in for the current bassist. He let me use his main bass, which was a Dingwall at the time. That was kind of the lowest one in that range and it felt amazing to play, and it sounded amazing unplugged, but I knew nothing about bass tone. I didn't really know what sounded good. So I wasn't too aware of what I was doing sounded great. I was also using his kind of jazz rig. But that stuck in my mind, how playable, and especially being a guitar player, how narrow the nut width is. This is a 6-string but I guess the nut width is kind of like a 5 almost. You can see the strings are really close together. And it's very top sensitive. So as a guitar player, it instantly really reached out to me.

**What about your rigs?**

**LW** I use an A-Designs Audio REDDI tube D.I. and a Tech 21 SansAmp Bass Driver D.I. re-amped through an Ampeg SVT-VR. Live, I use my Magnavox-era '70s SVT, and Ampeg

8x10 cab, and an Aguilar Tone Hammer pedal. I leave the SansAmp on pretty much the whole time. I get a good fingerstyle sound with that, and then I throw on the Tone Hammer for more pick attack and clarity. Other pedals will find their way into the mix, like a DigiTech Hardwire Tube Overdrive, and some effects by Source Audio and Fuzzrocious.

**EB** With the Faceless, the whole band goes direct—we don't use any cabs onstage—so my setup is beyond simple. I just have a Warwick Hellborg Preamp. I recently started running into a Two Notes Audio Engineering Torpedo C.A.B. cabinet simulator, which make it feel more like a miked cab in my in-ear monitors. We run all in-ear rigs—no amps, no monitors. So the stage is silent except for drums.

**Did you find it a difficult transition to in-ears with no onstage amplification?**

**EB** It was revolutionary right off the bat. I've never experienced anything like it, because all of a sudden I could hear string noise and I'd go, "Whoa, better fix that." I can hear nuance. To get my amp loud enough to where I can hear all that detail—that's is pretty destructive for a sound guy. Plus, those sound waves don't even develop until they're 20 feet past the stage. So the in-ears have helped me as a player. Our drummer plays to a click, and we all have the click in our



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in-ears, as well. That may sound sterile, but in the context of extremely technical death metal it just makes things a lot easier. I've been playing to a click for a long time, so I'm over that initial weirdness.

**NG** My thing's kind of strange because I've got to come clean, I'm not a long-term bassist. It's something I'm pretty new to. So I'm just finding my way with my ears rather than necessarily knowing the tradition and just through what my band does. We all run through Fractal Audio Axe-Fx units live, so everything is direct. For the album, the bass got run through a nice old Ampeg B-15, which was cool. But then for the road, I had to find my own sound. For that, I use Darkglass Electronics B7K pedal, which just has the most amazing sounding distortion.

**LW** I respect the revolution, and there's a part of me that wants something like a Fractal Audio Axe-Fx. But with my Ampeg, I know what I'm going to get. I have the sweet spot dialed in. I know that I've hit the ceiling with that, and I'm happy with that. I like the way it sounds. So all this other technology is fascinating in that I can dial in something that has never been done before. But to me, Dillinger is almost more of a punk band than a metal band. In a sportsmanly kind of way I like that we sometimes go onstage after bands that use Axe-Fx, and we've got all tubes firing, and it just *crushes*. I like volume. I don't care if everybody's too loud. I want it to feel that way. I want the audience to be at the point where it's almost unbearable.

#### What are your string preferences?

**LW** On our record, I was using different strings on almost every song. It was the only chance I had to try a bunch of different sounds. Mostly, I use Ernie Ball Nickels, .105–.045. I like stainless steel strings, too.

**EB** I use a custom Dunlop set gauged .110–.045. I haven't tried their new Heavy Core strings yet, because I don't want to increase the tension much. I might experiment with it, but I'm really happy with the tension with that set the way it is.

**NG** I use Circle K strings. One problem with fanned fret instruments is that a 37-inch scale doesn't work for many string brands. You just can't get them long enough. They'll taper out before the knot here or something. But these are kind of custom made, extra-huge gauges. You can go up to like a .260 or something.

**LW** That's like a piano string.

**NG** I don't even know what you'd try to tune that to. But, yeah, they do them. They do just about anything you can imagine basically and I think they sound great. I haven't had any other brands of strings

on these basses because you just can't get anything to work—other than Dingwall's proprietary ones, which are just designed for standard tuning.

#### Who are the players out there who are catching your ear?

**LW** Besides Evan, there's Colin Marston, who plays in Behold the Arctopus and Dysrhythmia. He's really, really interesting—really cool.

At the Revolver Golden Gods Awards, I made a point to say something to Rex Brown and Dave Ellefson. There's something about Muzz Skillings' playing in Living Colour—he was raw. I need some grit and attitude in there to latch onto. I like the Persian stitch—that element of wrong to make it seem more right. Janek Gwizdala is another dude that's fun to shoot the shit with. He's got such a huge personality, and he's not so uptight about things. And Bryan Beller is just rad. He's not trying to be the best—just the best Bryan Beller he could be, and he's awesome at it and just has the personality to back it up. Sean Malone from Cynic was one of the first dudes I heard that was poetic, but delivered with a metal attitude. That kind of blew me away.

**EB** Tom Jenkinson from Squarepusher is mind-blowingly awesome. I'm a fan of his approach to making music and creating with the bass. I don't even consider him a bass player; he's just a musician who plays bass. Dominique Di Piazza is another guy. He's largely influenced that particular right-hand approach. Regi Wooten was obviously a huge influence because he mentored me. There's also Larry Graham, Trevor Dunn, and Darryl Jenifer.

Oteil Burbridge is another guy. I think he's one of the most unique voices on the bass that I've heard in a really long time. He's inspired me tremendously. But I'm as influenced by songs I hear as I am by guys who are icons in the bass game. I actually learned largely from guitar players. For me, I always take from the people I name more than the people who are pertinent to my genres. I was never a huge metal head when I was a kid. I was more listening to stuff like that and digging into old funk, classic rock, jazz. I bring those influences to what I do and I think that's why I'm perceived as being maybe a little different for the heavy community. But I've found ways to make it work.

**NG** Sikh is a band that was very influential to me in terms of getting into a more mathy style of metal. Even though I didn't have much of an interest in bass at the time, I immediately noticed the bass playing that James Leach had done on both albums. On the first album, he used his fingers and did a lot of slapping and popping. Straight away I could hear

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Liam Wilson with his Zon  
Guitars Sonus 4-string.



the bass was doing something incredibly interesting, really bridging the gap between these guitars that were going off, and the drums, which are playing incredibly technical stuff. He found really neat ways of bridging the gap using slap-and-pop, tapping, or just plucking interesting melodic lines. He had a wicked bass tone. I haven't heard anything he's done since then, which is kind of a shame. That was hugely influential for me.

**LW** I might be getting a bit metaphysical here, but the other night I heard a train pulling away from a station at the end of the night as we were leaving a gig. I stood there and listened to that train for seriously like 10 minutes. Even birds' songs, or the sound of a chainsaw—those sounds influence me. It's obviously not just music that makes sound; there are noises everywhere. That's something I take out of listening to an artist like Flying Lotus, who takes a noise like that and turns it into music. I may be limited to bass, but I still trying to absorb as much as possible.

**EB** I think you're hitting on the key to any sort of innovation. You take something that doesn't belong and apply it where it shouldn't fit and that's how you get great new experiences.

**A lot of progressive metal guitarists are reaching into the low-end territory, with 7- and 8-string guitars. How do you cope?**

**EB** It's a struggle. Finding the right string gauges is really important. Beyond that, just understanding what will cut through in that context and realizing that you're not going to get away with fast triplets or speed picking on your low string. Just saying, "I need half of what the guitar player is doing when I'm anywhere below this range" helps. Matching isn't necessarily an option anymore. You can't demand so much from those low frequencies.

**LW** That that's where a lot of bass players get tripped up playing this kind of music. It's been great hearing Evan on this tour, tuning into what he's doing and realizing that he's not playing that fast—even though he can. He's actually playing slow at times and letting notes ring.

**EB** In technical music, there are bass players who want to match everything the guitar player is doing, and there are bass players who strive to have a counterpoint and do something different that will add to the hugeness of the sound. What I found is when you try to match a speed picking part or something that's really fast in a low frequency, all you hear is what sounds like you're playing at half speed, but

sloppy, whereas if you just play at half speed, it will sound like you're playing it solid and you're playing the right bass line.

**NG** The fun part for me is locking in with the drums. Coming from guitar, I'm amazing at how satisfied I am when I'm playing bass. Playing guitar is really stressful to me, actually. But playing bass, the joy for me comes with locking in with the drums. And I love playing with Matt, our drummer. He's a fantastic drummer—excellent sense of groove. I could play one note all night long and be satisfied just jamming with him. As long as I feel like the sound is being heard out front, or at least the power of what I'm doing is out front, that's the real satisfying thing. It doesn't matter that I tap and slap and do stuff like that at times. I'd be perfectly content just sitting around and one or two notes.

**LW** Everybody is so guitar-centric when they play bass in metal, whether it's guitar players coming over to bass, or the drumming just being so bombastic. But I prefer to pull back and find a way to lock into the simplest thing the drums are doing to have that contrast. I feel like a blast speed over a really slow thing has so much more feeling than everybody blasting with it.

**EB** I think every musician hits a point when they've played long enough and they've accomplished enough where the ego goes away, and it's not about "I got to show everybody that I can play all this stuff." When I'm playing with a band, I genuinely want to be a bass player. That's why I've created other outlets for myself to explore the more experimental side of bass. Because when I'm with a band, I want to do the bass player thing. I want to be the low guy, the rock that holds everything together. You watch Dillinger Escape Plan, and Liam is gluing the band together. He's that thing that is holding everything together, bridging the gap from the drums to the guitar. He has the melody and the rhythm and the harmony.

**LW** Also, when I record certain bass part, I'll simplify when I play them live. Whether anybody notice it or not, I don't know. It's kind of like pissing on my own leg—a warm feeling that only I know. [Laughs.] There's two-hand tapping on Dillinger records, but I'm not going to do that live, because it doesn't serve me. I don't want the focus on me. I want the focus to be on the whole spectacle. I say, get over yourself, cut the cord from your ego, and just play as if you were in the audience. Be the bass player you want to exist. **BP**



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# THE SON ALSO RISES

**FELIX PASTORIUS**

SUITS UP WITH  
THE YELLOWJACKETS

BY CHRIS JISI

**HIS NAME PRECEDES HIM, AS DOES HIS LANKY**

6'6" frame, featuring Avatar-like fingers that enable him to cleanly sound a C on the B, A, and C strings of his Fodera 6 in one swooping downstroke. But what ultimately makes a first impression of Felix Pastorius onstage with the Yellowjackets at New York's famed Birdland club is the intense focus with which he gets way inside music. From his centered stool, he simultaneously processes Bob Mintzer's winding tenor, Russell Ferrante's wave of piano harmony, and Will Kennedy's kinetic drums, before delighting the three vets with a nimble, neck-spanning solo. On his Jackets disc debut, *A Rise in the Road*, Felix is equally formidable, embracing the Jimmy Haslip-established model of moving from deep





## FELIX PASTORIUS



**The Yellowjackets  
(from left):  
Will Kennedy,  
Russell Ferrante,  
Bob Mintzer, and  
Felix Pastorius.**

grooves to featured melody or solo on "Civil War," "Madrugada," "Longing," and "(You'll Know) When It's Time" (the latter two on his dad's famed fretless Fender Jazz "Bass of Doom"). Those more familiar with Felix from his head-turning role in Jeff Coffin's Mu'Tet, and at various underground Manhattan and Brooklyn clubs, know that he's anything but a reissue of bass guitar royalty. Instead, the 31-year-old has formulated his own navigational approach to fingerboard harmony, rhythm, and ensemble function. Coupled with his natural musical gift, he stands poised to take the instrument down some exciting new paths.

Felix Pastorius was born June 9, 1982, into a Deerfield Beach, Florida home full of instruments. While his father Jaco was in and out of town gigging, his mother, Ingrid, encouraged her twin sons to embrace music. Felix started on violin and moved to piano lessons with his brother, Julius, at age seven. Intrigued by music theory, Felix figured out the steps and chords in a major scale, while a friend showed him a pentatonic scale. Bass happened at age ten, through a Dan Armstrong plexiglass model and the Fender Jaco Pastorius Signature Jazz Bass he and Julius received later to play "Continuum" at a Jaco tribute in New York City. Getting more

serious via a fretted J-Bass, he gathered the influences of Flea, Les Claypool, Victor Wooten (whom he met at a Larry Graham concert, when he was 14), and BASS PLAYER's Bass Day '97 video with, among others, Oteil Burbridge and John Patitucci. Just before his 16th birthday, Felix began working Florida clubs in a trio led by Weather Report percussionist Robert Thomas Jr., with vibist Tom Toyama. He laughs, "My mom would drive me to the gigs and sneak me in. Bobby wanted young musicians he could mold. He'd step up to the mic and introduce the tune by name, but there was no song! We'd make it up on the spot! Tom developed hand signals so I could follow the changes and turnarounds. When we finally got to rehearse, Bobby had us play in the dark to make us rely on our ears."

Felix—who formed Way Of The Groove with Julius on drums, and played with other friends in Tampa—attended Wooten's first bass camp in 2001 and made an impression. Soon after, when Flecktones and Dave Matthews Band saxophonist Jeff Coffin needed a bassist for his Mu'tet, Victor recommended Felix, who remembers, "The music was over my head, but I didn't want to let down Victor, so I made the leap." Filtered between regular Coffin runs were moves to Oakland, Seattle, and New York, and time



with the Florida jam band the Heavy Pets. Finally, in 2009, Felix committed to moving to New York full time, buoyed by a regular gig at Zinc Bar courtesy of family friend Neil Weiss. He also fit in road work with Cindy Blackman. 2011 was a busy year for Felix, capped by tragedy when Ingrid Pastorius passed away suddenly in November, at age 61. While in Florida after the funeral, he got a call from the Yellowjackets management to come to L.A. to audition for the band, based on Coffin's recommendation. Two weeks later, Mintzer, who sat in with the Felix-anchored Mu'tet a year earlier, called to welcome him to the band.

### What was your transition into the Yellowjackets like?

Both exciting and terrifying! My first gig was a little more than a month after the audition, on a borrowed 5-string [with a high C]. Bob and Russ had sent me the tracks and charts for about nine songs, but the recordings weren't the current versions. We rehearsed for an hour and a half and did the gig. The first time I played "Geraldine" I couldn't figure out what was going on; it was a different version than anything I'd heard and I was sweating bullets—somehow we all ended at the same time! My next gig was outdoors in front of 100,000 people in Italy, and Bobby Franceschini was subbing for Bob, so that was another interpretation of the music. I'm a huge fan of the band; Jimmy Haslip was the first bassist I saw besides my dad, when I was five and the Jackets came to the Musicians Exchange in Florida. I've always dug Jimmy's highly original left-handed, upside-down approach, and his adaptation of the 6-string into jazz was key for the electric bass.

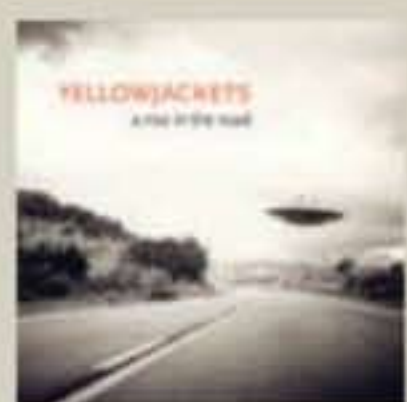
### How did you arrive at your parts on the CD?

That was another nerve-racking situation, especially with my minimal recording chops, and knowing a CD is a permanent document. We had just two four-hour rehearsals a week before the recording—and some of Bob's music is crazy! Also, management had decided 6-string is the sound of the Jackets, so I had just gotten my Fodera 6, which I'm still finding my way on. A lot of the bass parts were written and we worked out some things in rehearsal. We recorded live and for the improvised parts behind the soloists; I just listened and tried to not go too far outside the lines. But it was a terrific experience, with some great moments. I'm still in the process of learning the Jackets' vocabulary; there's a feel and

sensitivity every band has, and you have to understand how it works. I respect Bob, Russell, and Will so much, I'm constantly asking if there's anything I should be doing differently. I want to make their transition smooth. Going forward, I'm interested in getting better at writing and developing material with the guys that has my voice in there.

## i INFO

LISTEN



Yellowjackets, *A Rise in the Road* [Mack Avenue, 2013]; Jeff Coffin Mu'tet, *Into the Air* [Ear Up, 2012], *Live!* [Ear Up, 2011],

*Mutopia* [Compass, 2008]; *Gospel for J.F.P. III: Tribute to Jaco Pastorius* [MoonJune, 2005]

EQUIP

**Basses** Custom Fodera Emperor II-style 6-string with 27 frets in a 33" scale, three-piece maple neck, rosewood fingerboard, alder and ash body with a box elder burl top, single-coil J/J pickups, Fodera/Pope 3-band preamp; custom parts Jazz Bass, based on '60s specs

**Strings** D'Addario EPS170-6 ProSteels (.030, .045, .065, .080, .100, .130); Dunlop Nickel Wounds (.025, .040, .060, .080, .100, .120) for home practice

**Rig** Aguilar Tone Hammer head with two GS 112 cabinets

**Effects** MXR Bass Compressor, MXR Bass Octave Deluxe, Electro-Harmonix Cathedral Stereo Reverb, Electro-Harmonix Ring Thing Ring Modulator, unknown volume pedal, hair-tie mutes around the nut (à la Victor Wooten)

**Studio** On *A Rise in the Road*: Miked Aguilar rig along with direct signal via tube DI



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**You play your dad's "Bass of Doom" on "(You'll Know) When It's Time" and "Longing."**

On the second day of rehearsal, Russell said, "I'd love to have you play the melody on 'You'll Know,'" and my first thought was, This should be fretless because it's a beautiful ballad—even though I don't play fretless. So I called my family and I called Robert [Trujillo], who had the bass on tour with Metallica,

and they were all for it. Robert brought the bass over the night before the recording, and I tweaked the neck and put new roundwounds on it. I used the back pickup with a little neck pickup added, too. My dad changed his sound over the years, which is just one of the reasons I wish he was around, so I could ask him about that.

**Describe the influence your dad had on you.**

I guess the initial influence was that my dad was so loved by so many. Growing up surrounded by his family and friends, his music was always on, and everyone I knew was head over heels in love with him. The few memories I have of being with him are all good. He was a jokester, always trying to play pranks on people. I saw some of it, but I got most of who my dad was through my family. Bass-wise, I know all of his songs by heart, and for the ones I've studied deeply, the challenge was trying to figure out the fingerings because some of what he played is almost physically impossible. I also think his composing is just as important. I believe his writing is going to last longer, in some ways, than his playing—his playing affects bass players, but his writing affects everybody.

**Was there some concern when you settled on the same instrument as your dad?**

Probably so. I never really had that conversation with any family members, although I'm sure some of them would now say, What were you thinking? But for me it has never really been an issue, except with certain people who can't look past it. Like, I had a 7-string at one point, and after a gig a guy came up to me and said, "Was *that* your dad's bass?" I felt like, Come on, does everything I do have to involve my dad? I understand it, though; he got everyone hooked on the instrument. But for me I just enjoyed playing bass. There wasn't any other option. It was also a little strange meeting my bass idols. As the son of one of their idols, they were looking at me almost the same way I was looking at them!

**Let's talk about your right- and left-hand technique.**

I usually observe what others are doing and then



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**Bob Mintzer On Felix Pastorius**

"We auditioned several bassists. Felix seemed to have the best fit, both musically and personally. He has the team spirit and played the supportive role of bassist while also being a dynamic soloist. Felix is his own person separate of Jaco. Most electric bassists are influenced by Jaco in some way, but Felix is developing his own voice by way of constructing his own systematic approach to dealing with harmony, melody, and rhythm. Felix brings a lightness and open quality to the music. In a band like this, a personnel change will send the music in another direction, and we're all excited about Felix's input."



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adapt it in my own way. My dad's method of playing an *F* major scale [index *F*, middle *G*, pinkie *A* on the *E* string; index *B*, middle *C*, pinkie *D* on the *A* string; index *E*, middle *F* on the *D* string] made the most sense to me, the way it moves your hand across the neck. It's a big stretch in the first few positions, but another way to think of it is, if you play a finger-per-fret chromatically starting on *F* on the *E* string

[*F*, *G*, *G*, *A*], all you have to do is drop your index finger to *F* natural and you have the shape. In my right hand, most of the fast stuff I play is with 1st and 2nd fingers. I adapted a fingerstyle approach using my thumb, index, and middle fingers, plus my palm for muting, based on seeing players like Victor [Wooten], Gary Willis, Dominique Di Piazza, and Matt Garrison do it. My version is to always

play thumb, index, middle in order, but to gain dexterity, I practice it in patterns of 4, 5, or 7, so the thumb isn't always landing on a downbeat. The other aspect of my technique I notice is often I'm trying to make a fretted bass sound fretless with hammer-ons and legato phrasing—probably because I grew up with that sound.

**Based on your most recorded role, as a member of Jeff Coffin's Mu'tet, you have a penchant for fluid improvised grooves and solos.**

To me, grooving, walking, soloing, and playing chordally are essentially the same, and there are endless options and variables in each of those situations. It's really about creating in the moment and trying to figure out the most efficient and musical way to support or lead. Honestly, performing isn't necessarily the highpoint for me. It can paint you into a corner as being a certain kind of musician. The biggest kick I get out of music is learning it. For me, there's nothing better than being home practicing and working out concepts.

**You play regularly with a few bands in your New York City home base.**

Those are fun vehicles to work on ideas; we've had the Hipster Assassins since 2010, built around a regular gig at Zinc Bar, with my best bass buddy Mike Bendy, his brother John on guitar, Chris Ward on sax, and Kenny Gronowski on drums. We bring all of our different backgrounds to the music, which has been called "punk jazz." Lately I've been focusing on my band with Chris, drummer Devin Collins, and pianist William Tatge, called Social Experiment, which started from a regular gig at Cubana Social restaurant in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. It's my first real attempt at writing original music, drawn from fragments of melodies and progressions I've come up with over the years.

**Where do you see yourself in ten years?**

If I had to commit, the most comfortable situation I can envision is fully developing this concept I have of making the bass a much broader instrument technically and musically. Bass is not like a piano, where the entire keyboard is right in front of you. We have four or five or six chromatic-scale strings tuned in 4ths, and we're restricted by which string we're on, which fret, and which finger we're using. By breaking open how music can work on the fingerboard, bass can expand beyond the traditional support role to being just another instrument that plays the same 12 notes. We should have the freedom on bass to be able to play any role, in any style of music, in any way. I want to put together a book on this; I'm constantly writing out patterns and theories. **BP**

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# SOUND ROOM

## Roundup Semi-Hollow & Hollowbody Basses

D'Angelico **EX-Bass**  
Ibanez **ASB180 & AGB205**  
Warwick **RockBass Star Bass**  
**4- & 5-Strings**

BY BRIAN FOX

**WHETHER IT'S THE WOODY WHOOMP OF PAUL** McCartney's Höfner 500/1 or the woofy *thump* of the Epiphone Rivoli bass Paul Samwell-Smith, Jimmy Page, and Chris Dreja rocked in the Yardbirds, the sound of semi- and hollowbody basses is as big a part of the rock & roll bass lexicon as roundwound-strung Rickenbackers or P-Basses with flats. This year, a bunch of manufactures debuted new hollowbody and semi-hollow basses. We'll be following up with other new models as more hit the market, but here's a quick look at a few that are out now from D'Angelico, Ibanez, and Warwick.



D'Angelico EX-Bass









D'Angelico EX-Bass



D'ANGELICO

## S SPECIFICATIONS

### EX-BASS

**Street** \$1,420

**Pros** Extraordinary resonance; full, open voice

**Cons** Limited saddle adjustability

**Bottom line** D'Angelico's entry into the bass market is a strong one that raises the bar for instruments in its class.

**Contact** dangelicoguitars.com

**Construction** Set-neck hollowbody

**Top, back, and sides** Laminated flame maple

**Neck** 2-piece maple with walnut stringer

**Fingerboard** Rosewood

**Pickups** Two dual-coil

**Electronics** Passive

**Width at nut** 1.5"

**Scale length** 32.25"

**Weight** 7.25 lbs

**Made in** Korea

Ibanez ASB180



IBANEZ

### ASB180

**Street** \$500

**Pros** Bargain-priced big-bootied thump

**Cons** Problematic pickup wiring on tester

**Bottom line** Wiring anomaly aside, the ASB180 cops old-school semi-hollow thump at a remarkable price point.

**Construction** Set-neck semi-hollow

**Top, back, and sides** Laminated maple

**Neck** 3-piece mahogany and maple

**Fingerboard** Rosewood

**Pickups** Two dual-coil

**Electronics** Passive

**Width at nut** 1.65"

**Scale length** 30.3"

**Weight** 9 lbs

**Made in** China

Ibanez AGB205



### AGB205

**Street** \$600

**Pros** Short scale length and tight string spacing make for a comfortable feel

**Cons** Murky low register

**Bottom line** The AGB205's low end is a tad flaccid, but the bass nonetheless has a certain rootsy charm.

**Construction** Set-neck semi-hollow

**Top, back, and sides** Laminated maple

**Neck** 3-piece mahogany and maple

**Fingerboard** Rosewood

**Pickups** Two dual-coil

**Electronics** Passive

**Width at nut** 1.75"

**Scale length** 30.3"

**Weight** 8.75 lbs

**Made in** China

**Contact** Ibanez.com





## D'LIGHTFUL

Formed in the 1930s by native New Yorker John D'Angelico, continued through the 1960s by one-time apprentice Jimmy D'Aquisto, and purchased in 2011 by guitar collector and businessman John M. Ferolito, Sr., the D'Angelico brand of guitars has long been regarded as one of the world's finest, especially

in the realm of arch-top instruments. This year, D'Angelico has shown some love for the low end with the introduction of its EX-Bass, a set-neck, medium-scale hollowbody. While D'Angelico offers a premium of American-made guitars built by luthier Gene Baker at the Premier Builders Guild Workshop in California, its Standard Series instruments—including the EX-Bass—are manufactured in Incheon, Korea.

From its arched flame maple top and back to its wooden knobs, block inlays, crème-colored body binding, and distinctive headstock bling (an Art-Deco nod to the famous the New Yorker Hotel), the EX-Bass oozes elegance. Unlike a semi-hollow bass, which would have a center block running under the pickups from the neck joint to the bottom-side strap button, the EX-Bass is a true hollowbody. Played acoustically, the D'Angelico has sustain and resonance unlike any other hollowbody I've played; notes sounded rich and full, and felt as if they could ring for days. The bass's 32" scale length, rounded neck profile, and Jazz-like width at the nut make for a comfortable combination, particularly when played while seated. On a strap, the bass hangs reasonably well, but it does have a tendency to neck-dive. The bass's overall construction quality seemed excellent, with smooth fret edges and solid hardware. The saddle-and-tailpiece style bridge looks elegant and intonates relatively easy, but only allows for gross saddle height adjustments, with no set screws to change individual string height.

Finding the sweet spots for pickup placement on a semi- or hollowbody bass can be tricky—too far in and it's overly woofy, too far back and the bark turns thin and clacky. Here, D'Angelico nails the formula. The neck pickup, placed roughly at

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## SOUNDROOM

where the 23rd fret would be, is woofy but not wheezy, warm but still articulate. Similarly, the bridge pickup, which sits a bit further inland than many basses of this style, has the punch of a Musicman-style pickup with none of the nasal characteristics of so many solo'd bridge pickups. Despite the EX-Bass's tremendous acoustic resonance, I had no problems with feedback when I plugged in and turned up.

Style goes a long way, and the D'Angelico has that part down in spades with its entry into the bass market. But where it matters most, playability and sound, D'Angelico is equally on the mark. For that, we give it a BASS PLAYER Editor Award.

### ARTCORE RAP

We've been trying to keep up with all the new products coming from Ibanez this year, from its Premium ATK 4-string to its Nordstrand-loaded, 35"-scale Premium BTB 5-string. This month we turn to two new additions to the company's Artcore line of semi-hollow basses, the Gibson-esque ASB180, and the short-scale 5-string AGB205. Both feature set-neck construction, laminated maple tops, backs, and sides, 3-piece necks of mahogany and maple, and dual humbucking pickups.

If semi-hollow basses are known and loved for one thing, it's big bottom, normally coming courtesy of a big ol' neck-position humbucker. In this department, the ASB180 delivers. Solo'd, the ASB180's neck pickup doles out delicious low end that's a little on the dark side, but still retains enough clarity to keep from muddying the mix. Bringing the bridge pickup into play—a mere switch flick away—helps even out the edges of the single neck humbucker, as if knocking down midrange peaks in favor of a more rounded sound. I found the ASB180's bridge pickup to be a bit barky to use on its own, but I dig how it plays well with its humbucking bro. There was a pesky wiring anomaly with our tester ASB180: depressing the neck pickup's metal cover into the body caused the output to stutter and cut out.

The AGB205 semi-hollow 5-string is another new addition to the Ibanez Artcore line. Though it shares several key features—construction, materials, electronics—with the ASB180, the AGB205 is certainly a creature unto itself. With its 30" scale length and close string spacing (1.75" at the nut), the AGB205 feels as much like a Bass VI-style axe as it does a typical 5-string. Reaching down into the short-scale 5-string's lower register, things do begin to sound a tad murky—at least compared to a full-size solid-body 5. If pianistic clarity and a quick, tight response is what you're after, the AGB205 might not be a match. That said, the AGB205's loose, rootsy *thump*

is a cool sound on its own, and one that could sit well in a number of settings.

### STAR POWER

When Warwick introduced its semi-hollow Star Bass II back in 2008, we were fortunate to review one [February '09]. Though named after the 1956 Framus Star Bass made famous by Bill Wyman, the reintroduced Star Bass II was actually quite different from that short-scale hollowbody, sporting a 34" scale length and semi-hollow construction. With its figured bubinga laminate body, ovankol neck and wenge fingerboard, the Star Bass II was a wood-lover's dream, but the price tag of the German-made bass put it out of reach for many bass players. By bringing the Star Bass design to its RockBass line of instruments and changing some of its materials, Warwick has brought the cost of the Star Bass down to a much more competitive price point.

With its RockBass Star Bass, Warwick has again tweaked the formula in terms of scale length; the 4-string version has a 32" scale length, while the 5-string is 34". Taking the 4-string out for a spin, I quickly acclimated to the medium scale length, and appreciated that it made the bass less susceptible to neck-dive when hung on a strap, a common issue with basses with this body shape. Still, I find the Star Bass more comfortable to play while seated.

Despite their wide footprint, the Star Bass' two pickups are actually single-coils. Though I thought I'd miss the big bottom that comes from a semi-hollow's neck-position humbucker, the airier single-coils actually complement the Star Bases quite well, lending extra clarity in the high end. Solo'd, the neck-pickup—positioned in a Precision-like sweet spot—offers full-bodied thump, while the bridge pickup barks without sounding too harsh.

Swapping the 4- for the 5-string, the only thing more striking than our tester's über-cool Daphne Blue finish is the bass's lively low end; acoustically and plugged in, the 5-string Star Bass' lower reaches feel taut and speak clearly. The added weight and scale length make the 5-string a bit more cumbersome to play while standing, but the instrument's overall ergonomics are good. Like most high-end Warwick basses, the RockBass Star Bases feature fully adjustable saddles and the company's Just-A-Nut III adjustable nuts, which make intonating and setting the action relatively painless.

We're looking forward to following up in a future issue with looks at new semi-hollow offerings from Guild, Lakland, Höfner, and more. In the meantime, check these out and get your thump on! **BP**





## S SPECIFICATIONS

WARWICK

### ROCKBASS STAR BASS

**Street** 4-string, \$900;  
5-string, \$950

**Pros** Good clarity courtesy of twin single-coil pickups; taut, articulate *B* string on the 5-string

**Cons** None

**Bottom line** Warwick's RockBass version of the Star Bass lacks the bling of its German counterpart, but maintains every bit of the *boom*.

**Contact** warwickbass.com

**Construction** Set-neck semi-hollow

**Top, back, and sides** Laminated maple

**Neck** Maple with ekanga stringers

**Fingerboard** Rosewood

**Pickups** Two MEC single-coils

**Electronics** Passive

**Width at nut** 4-string, 1.5"; 5-string, 1.75"

**Scale length** 4-string, 32"; 5-string, 34"

**Weight** 4-string, 7.9 lbs; 5-string, 8.7 lbs

**Made in** China

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## Pigtronix

# Bass Envelope Phaser, Philosopher Bass Compressor & Bass FAT Drive

BY E.E. BRADMAN

**PIGTRONIX, BASED IN LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK, IS A SMALL** company that has gained acclaim for its 21st-Century spin on vintage tone. Several of the company's guitar pedals, including the Mothership analog guitar synth, the Envelope Phaser, and the Disnortion—a fuzz and overdrive with an octave-up function—have been popular with bass players, so it's good news that Pigtronix has tweaked three new products specifically for us.

The Philosopher Bass Compressor, which specializes in sustain and optical compression with a side order of overdrive, is a bass-tuned remix of the company's Philosopher's Tone compressor. The bass version of the company's FAT Drive is an analog distortion pedal designed to emulate warm, tube-like overdrive, and the Bass Envelope Phaser, a slim version of the company's Envelope Phaser, does its own take on the sound many of us associate with envelope filters. All three groovy-looking bass-specific stompboxes feature true-bypass



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In 2003 Gary Grainger sat down with our engineers and helped us create the genesis of the Grainger Bass. Originally available only through Private Stock, the Grainger 4 and Grainger 5 are now available from our core line in an elegant and simplified configuration. This instrument has become the go-to bass for many of today's top musicians. Because of the extraordinary woodwork, hardware and proprietary pre-amp, these basses have all the tone, clarity, power and feel a player needs.



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switching, and all three use slim 18-volt power supplies instead of batteries, affording them more headroom and higher output while maintaining a small form factor. Like all compact Pigtronix pedals, the input and outputs are smartly situated on the lower third of the pedal, a small plus that can make all the difference on a crowded pedalboard.

## GET FAT

Okay, I admit it: I'm not much of a distortion guy. As much as I like to play around with razor-sharp evil in the privacy of my own home, most of my gigs require me to keep the bottom on the bottom and not get too sparkly up top. Sometimes, however, when I hear a passive bass pushing a tube amp just over the line, I covet gritty fuzz and warm overdrive. The Bass FAT Drive delivered the sound I hear in my dreams: No matter how far I turned the TONE knob, it was always thick and focused and never abrasive.

I started out by plugging in my Ibanez ATK805 5-string, strung with Dunlop standard-gauge nickels, and adjusting the volume so that my effected tone was right in line (or a little higher) than my clean tone. With the ATK805's tone knob set dead center, the Bass FAT Drive's TONE at noon, and GAIN around 9 o'clock, I got a ballsy tone with just a hint of fuzz. Putting GAIN at noon, switching to the back pickup, and opening up the treble on my bass gave me a satisfying rattle that made me want to spend hours laying down classic rock riffs. Turning down TONE put me back in Motown fuzz territory, and when I dimed GAIN and turned TONE all the way down, the sludge was a thing of beauty, especially when I grabbed 5ths and turned up the bass knob. Coming up from the deep was as easy as flicking the MORE switch and diming both TONE and GAIN.

## UNFILTERED

The sound of the traditional envelope filter is such an integral part of our bass consciousness that most of us hardly stop to think of its imperfections. To the geeks and wizards at Pigtronix, however, sacrificing highs for the right "woof," lows for the right "quack," or diluting the effect by mixing in clean signal are compromises that are simply unacceptable. Their workaround? The envelope phaser, which derives its strength from a 50-50 mix of wet and dry signals and consistently fills a large chunk of the audible spectrum. Pigtronix phasers also include proprietary magic like two peaks that remain exactly two octaves apart and a staccato circuit that closes the envelope between notes.

Say what you will about the concept, but the Bass Envelope Phaser was so bootylicious that for a moment, I wondered whether it was adding low end. Sneaking sensitivity up to noon and keeping the switch in the up position put me on my way toward a more bottom-heavy variation on Anthony Jackson's classic "Money" part and Phil Lynott's groovin' "Dancin' in the Moonlight" line, especially when I stayed on the front pickup. But turning up RESONANCE brought the freakiness to a whole 'nother level—the more I cranked it, the more pronounced the vowels were; the sweet spot

seemed to be SENSITIVITY at noon and RESONANCE between noon and 3 o'clock. No matter what I threw at it—slow Bootsie ballads, reckless slap parts, 16th-note licks, harmonics—it sounded great.

## HOLD IT, NOW HIT IT

Blending effected and clean tones may not be right for envelope filters, but it definitely works on the Philosopher Bass Compressor. Bypassing the usual attack, release, ratio, and threshold controls, this Philosopher gets lots of mileage from its three knobs: COMPRESSION, which blends compressed and clean signals; SUSTAIN, which stands in for a threshold control; and VOLUME, which sets the output level.

With VOLUME and COMPRESSION at noon and SUSTAIN at 9 o'clock, compression was relatively transparent. Inching up COMPRESSION made things fatter and reggae-ready, but adding SUSTAIN made all the difference, increasing volume, decreasing dynamics, squashing the tone, and adding a ridiculous amount of sustain. Harmonics seemed to go on forever. Turning SUSTAIN all the way on brought me right back to some of my favorite, over-squeezed slap tones of the '80s. The Philosopher was clean and transparent, at least until I flicked the GRIT switch, which added a Jack Bruce-inspired overdrive that offered a looser version of the Bass FAT Drive's thickness.

Pigtronix's favorite acronym, FAT, refers to the company's dedication to Futuristic Analog Technology—but it could also express the care with which its bass-specific pedals protect the low frequencies. The Philosopher's Bass Compressor, Bass Envelope Phaser, and the Bass FAT Drive, which all boast studio-grade analog tone and road-ready construction, are three exceptional additions to any working bass player's pedalboard. If this is the future, the future looks good. **BP**

## S SPECIFICATIONS

**Street** Philosopher's Bass Compressor; \$209, Bass Envelope Phaser, \$249; Bass FAT Drive, \$189

**Pros** Strong and versatile options, no loss of lows, small form factor

**Cons** None

**Bottom line** Pigtronix' new trio of bass-specific stompboxes boast studio-grade analog tone and road-ready construction.

**Contact** pigtronix.com

PIGTRONIX



# WORLD TRAVELER



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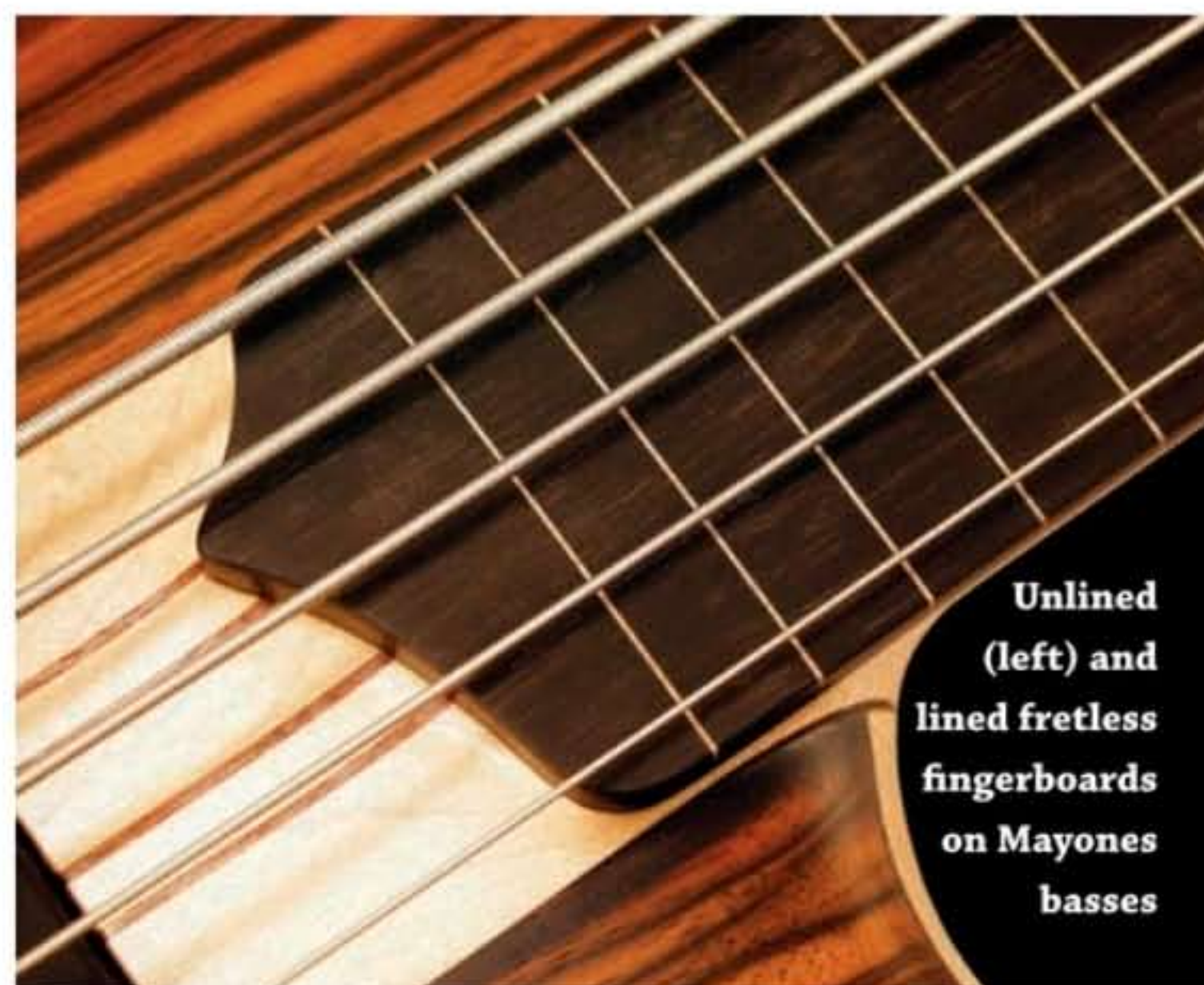




# TECHBENCH



MOD SQUAD



Unlined (left) and lined fretless fingerboards on Mayones basses

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## Fretless-ize Your Life!

BY ED FRIEDLAND

**IF YOU'RE PRONE TO BOUTS OF B.M.S. (BASS Modification Syndrome),** at some point you've probably looked at one of your basses and wondered, "What if it were fretless?" No doubt you've read how a young Jaco Pastorius changed the bass world by yanking the frets out of his Fender Jazz Bass and coating the fingerboard with marine epoxy to create the Bass of Doom. Put down the pliers, buddy—I'm here to talk you off the ledge. While it may seem like a simple matter of defanging the fingerboard, if you're not a luthier (and prefer not to ruin your axe), bring it to a pro, one who is experienced with this particular operation.

Converting a bass to fretless carries a risk, even when performed by skilled hands. Removing fret wire and filling the slots with material will change the neck's resonant frequency, and how the neck interacts with the body; there is always a chance you won't like the results. On a neck-through or set-neck instrument, this is potentially fatal. If your bass has a bolt-on neck, first look into a fretless replacement neck—companies such as Warmoth, USA Custom Guitars, and Allparts sell replacement necks for Fender-style basses as well as several other models. But be forewarned: You will need to have the nut slots filed, make sure the neck pocket fits properly, and drill holes for the neck bolts.

If you buy a replacement neck, the first decision is to go with or without fret lines. The fret lines help maintain your visual reference on the neck, and they can be guidelines for good intonation, but they won't guarantee it. Some people just love the aesthetic beauty of an unlined fingerboard, while others take it as a point of pride that they "don't need no stinking fret lines." Playing in tune is a challenge on fretless, and ultimately your ears are the most important tool for good intonation, but I prefer having lines anyway. Unlined fretless necks have position dots along the top edge of the fingerboard, but you'll need to adjust to the

dot being placed where the *fret* would be, not placed in between, like on a fretted bass. (Some basses, like my 1973 unlined fretless Gibson Ripper, have the dots placed in the same position as on a fretted bass, making it even more interesting to play.) If you are de-fretting a bass, you can choose a lighter wood such as maple to fill in the slots visibly, or find a wood that more closely matches the fingerboard, for a stealthier look.

Another choice is the type of wood for the neck and fingerboard—or even, not wood. Moses Graphite makes graphite replacement necks for several basses; they can be ordered in lined or unlined fretless versions. Graphite offers structural stability and even tonal response, and many love its natural clarity for fretless applications. I've found that graphite necks are relatively inert when compared to wood, and seem to work best paired with a highly resonant body. Slapping one on a cheapo import will not miraculously transform it into a Zon. Most replacement wood necks are flatsawn hard maple, but quartersawn maple's greater stiffness and stability may be worth the upgrade. Fretless fingerboards are typically rosewood, pau ferro, or ebony, although maple is not unheard of.

The discussion of how fingerboard wood affects tone takes on an interesting dimension with fretless bass, as the string comes in direct contact with the wood. It's often said that ebony sounds brighter than rosewood, and that maple has the potential to be brighter than ebony. But different body woods, construction methods, strings, pickups, and technique all play a big role in tone production as well. Without frets, the feel of the wood plays a greater role in your tactile experience. You may like the smooth feel of a tight-grained ebony board, or prefer the organic texture of a rosewood plank. Some instruments, such as the Ibanez Gary Willis model, have composite fingerboards (in this case, a material called ebonol), which can offer the advantages of graphite with the workability of ebony.



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Another factor in the fretless equation is fingerboard treatment. Jaco used marine resin epoxy to create a hard surface that would stand up to the punishment of roundwound strings grinding into the fingerboard. Pedulla uses a similar treatment on its fretless instruments, and many builders offer this as an option. If you're going the replacement neck route, you will have to find a luthier capable and willing to do the job. It's a sticky, sloppy operation that requires patience and skill to do correctly. The advantages of a coated fingerboard are longevity, decreased sensitivity to weather conditions, and a glassy top end on sustained notes, which some players love. But some fretless players are looking for a double bass-type experience, and the sound and feel of a string vibrating against unfinished wood gets them closer.

If you do intend to have your fingerboard epoxy coated, make sure the neck itself is not overly reactive to temperature and humidity fluctuations. I once had a coated-board fretless that played great for about four months, but when the weather changed, the neck twisted just enough to

make sanding the fingerboard necessary. Removing the epoxy added many hours and dollars to the job. If you just have to do the Jaco thing, roundwounds are the way to go, coated fingerboard or not. Rounds will eventually chew up an uncoated fingerboard, but if you stay on top of the damage with periodic (professionally done) light sanding, you can avoid major ruts in the board. Unless you play that one fretless bass exclusively, or have cave-man technique that grinds your strings against the fingerboard (lighten up, dude!), you should be able to get a few years of playing in before any touch up is needed. You may want to try nickel instead of harder stainless steel strings. If you want an epoxy coating mainly to prevent wood damage, consider using flatwound or nylon-tapewound strings. These are more fingerboard-friendly while giving a more upright-like tone.

Coated or uncoated, the most critical aspect of a successful fretless bass is the "dress" of the fingerboard itself. A poorly dressed board will make even the nicest instrument sound worthless, while it's possible to take a cheap import and make it

play great with a proper setup. Local Austin luthier (and bassist extraordinaire) Brady Muckelroy has transformed two of my fretless instruments into total "mwah" monsters. He told me: "I like to go for a level fingerboard with a tiny amount of fall away in the upper register if needed. From there, the neck can be adjusted to be level or have the desired amount of relief." Brady also talks about filing the nut: "A proper nut carve is crucial to the performance of a bass—fretted or fretless. If the slots are cut too high, it will be very uncomfortable to play and the intonation will be out in the lower register. Too low, the open string will buzz." In general, the absence of frets means the slots will need to be cut a little deeper than on a fretted bass. Once your fretless is together, all you have to do is learn how to play in tune! Fretless bass opens up an entirely new set of challenges, but the creative rewards are great, and having it in your toolbox will help you on the path to being a full-service bass player. My legal department also tells me I should say: Please, don't let B.M.S. make you use your U.S. MTD for your D.I.Y.! **BP**

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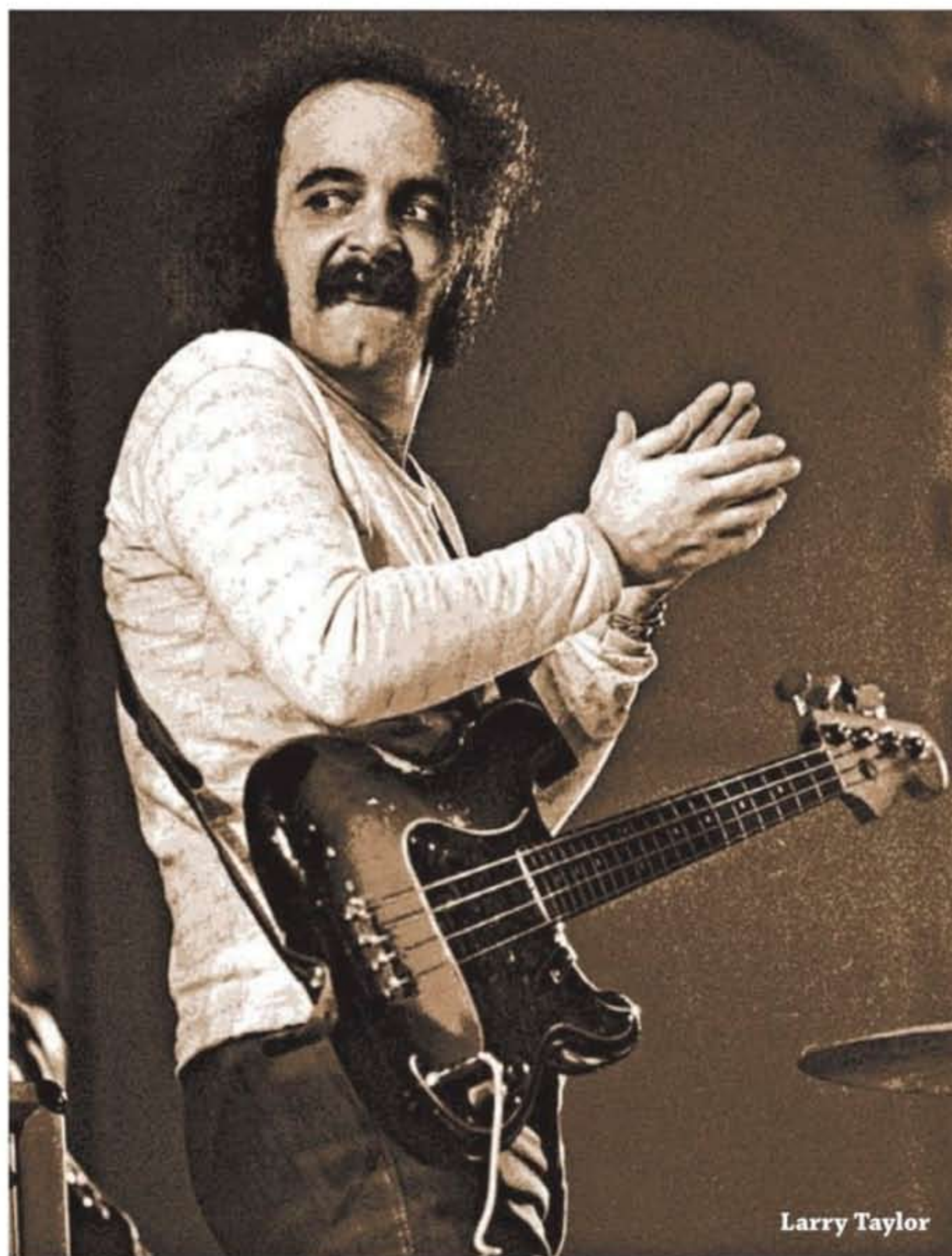




# WOODSHED SHEET



BLUES YOU CAN USE



Larry Taylor

## Larry Taylor's Union Blues

BY ED FRIEDLAND

### OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS, WE'VE LOOKED AT SOME BRITISH BLUES

bassists from the 1960s, and then crossed the Atlantic to examine the work of Harvey Brooks. This month, we'll join the two worlds by delving into the work of Larry Taylor, a native New Yorker, and his work on famed British bluesman John Mayall's 1970 recording *USA Union*. As a teenage guitarist, I was heavily into Mayall's work of the late '60s through the early '70s. Albums like *The Turning Point*, *Empty Rooms*, *USA Union*, and *Jazz Blues Fusion* lived on my turntable as I absorbed the guitar work, but little did I realize that Larry Taylor's bold underpinning was making an indelible mark on my soon-to-be-realized bass consciousness. Coming back to these records after almost 40 years, I was astounded at how much of the bass playing I knew by heart, and just how much Taylor had influenced me without realizing it.

Taylor's early work displays a firm grasp of James Jamerson's bass style, but with a crisp articulation that also brings to mind aspects of Chuck Rainey. One of Larry's earliest tracks is the surf instrumental "Moon Dawg" with the Gamblers, said to be one of the first instrumental surf bands. Even at the breakneck tempo, Taylor's bass speaks with an authority atypical of the genre. He went on to be a session bassist in L.A., playing on the Monkees' hit recordings before signing up to become a member of the blues/rock supergroup Canned Heat. Taylor appeared with the band at the Monterey Pop and Woodstock festivals, and scored multiple hits before leaving in 1970 to join forces with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers.

### i INFO

ED FRIEDLAND

Ed "the Bass Whisperer" Friedland plays, writes, and teaches out of his bass base in Austin, Texas. [edfriedland.com](http://edfriedland.com)

LISTEN



John Mayall, *USA Union* [Polydor, 1970]



Mayall's group started as an early British blues outfit, contemporary with the Yardbirds. While both groups briefly included Eric Clapton on guitar, Mayall's Bluesbreakers With Eric Clapton is often critically held up as the pinnacle of British blues. When Mayall moved to L.A., Taylor joined his "USA Union" band, which led to several albums showcasing his strong groove, expressive chops, and sheer chutzpah. Check out the track "Off the Road" on *USA Union*, for nearly three minutes of Mayall singing to Taylor's solo bass accompaniment—a radical idea in 1970. Mayall's "To a Princess" on *Empty Rooms* features a duel between Taylor and bassist Steve Thompson, sparring on opposite sides of the stereo field, pre-dating Spinal Tap's "Big Bottom" by 14 years.

This month's example is a look at Larry Taylor's playing on "Deep Blue Sea" from Mayall's

*USA Union*. It's essentially a 12-bar blues form with an extended tag that starts in bar 10. The laid back funky feel brings to mind "Ode to Billie Joe," and the sparse rhythm accompaniment (which sounds like hippies shaking tambourines and banging on the back of their guitars) really lets the full impact of the bass hit you. **Example 1** is very similar to Taylor's line during Harvie Mandel's guitar solo. The line is full of classic R&B material—box patterns, chromatic approach runs, anticipated downbeats, and lots of percussive dead notes. He uses the pattern in bar 1 throughout the track to congeal the groove, applying different answer phrases in bars 2, 4, and 8 to vary the line. His use of ghosted dead notes gives the line bounce, and the dead-note "drags" in bars 4, 6, 10, 14, and 16 are particularly upright bass-inspired.

Taylor uses a crisply performed 16th-note

double chromatic approach run in bars 8, 10, and 12 that sets up the next chord with authority and drives the feel forward. By today's standards, this line may seem commonplace, but in 1970, there were not many bass players on the scene with this level of command. Taylor's strong feel, dynamic approach, and decisive articulation made him one of the leading players of that time.

Larry Taylor went on to form a long association with songwriter Tom Waits, playing with him live and in the studio since 1980, as well as making appearances on records by Leo Kottke, Sugarcane Harris, the Blasters, John Lee Hooker, Ry Cooder, Charlie Musselwhite, J.J. Cale, Wanda Jackson, Buddy Guy, and many others. For several decades, Taylor has focused primarily on upright playing, but his early work on electric bass is a treasure trove of cool grooves. Check him out! **BP**

EX. 1

♩ = 110

D7

G7

6

D7

A7

G7

11

D

C

G

D

C

G

15

D

C

G

A7





## JAZZ CONCEPTS

# Bottoms Up!

BY JOHN GOLDSBY

**WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO LEARN TO GET** around the bass—from bottom to top and top to bottom? Arpeggios! This month, we'll look at the best techniques for practicing broken chords.

In his e-book *Melodic Arpeggios and Triad Combining for Bass*, John Patitucci writes, "If we can enjoy working on these crucial building blocks, we will buy ourselves a tremendous amount of freedom when it comes to expression, whether we are dealing with the music of Mozart or Coltrane." Patitucci's compact and excellent ebook outlines the importance of mastering arpeggios, with the goal of keeping practice material fresh and engaging.

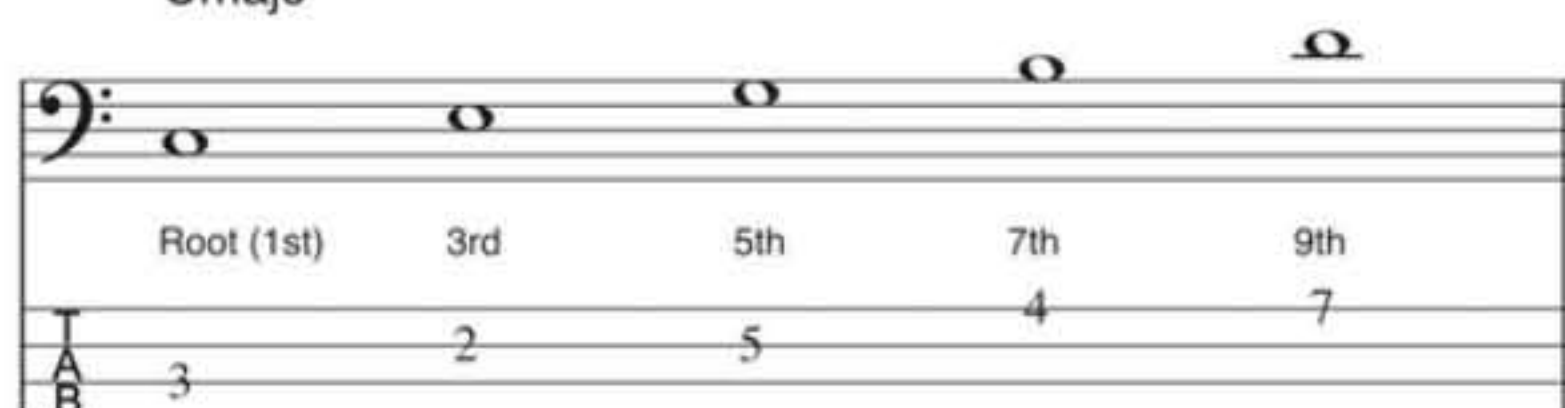
Bassist Josh Fossgreen also deals with arpeggios in his free-for-the-taking mini-ebook, *Play Da Bass* [joshfossgreen.com]. He writes, "You can extrapolate these ideas to an immense amount of material: All four types of triads (major, minor, diminished, augmented), and all three inversions. You can do this in any key, and you can play most of

the patterns either starting on the *A* or the *E* string. You can also start at the top of the arpeggio instead of the bottom. A lot of the fun of this technique is in the infinite possibilities!"

The common method for learning arpeggios is from the bottom up, starting on the root of the chord, and playing up in combinations of either major-3rd or minor-3rd intervals. In these examples, we use chords to the 9th, which is one octave above the 2nd note found in a particular scale. For example, in a *C* major scale, *D* is the 2nd note. If we raise the note *D* one octave so it sits at the top of a *C* chord, the note is called the 9th.

You can build a *C* major 9 (*Cmaj9*) arpeggio by starting on *C* and using every other note of a *C* major scale: *C-E-G-B-D* (**Ex. 1**). We can also refer to these notes as the 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 of the chord. Notes of a scale, and notes in an arpeggio, are often analyzed by the number of their scale degree, so musicians use numbers when talking about chords, i.e., "Don't play the ♭9 on a *Cmaj9* chord."

Cmaj9



EX. 1


**INFO**

Visit John on the web at [johngoldsby.com](http://johngoldsby.com) for sound samples, videos, and answers to all of your bass-related questions.

JOHN GOLDSBY

- Michael Furstner explains the magic of the 9 chord.
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EX. 2

C9

Root (1st) 3rd 5th 7th 9th

3 2 5 3 7

EX. 3

Cm9

Root (1st) 3rd 5th 7th 9th

3 6 5 8 7

EX. 4

Medium slow/  
groovy Cmaj9

3 2 5 4 7 4 5 2 3

EX. 5

C9

3 2 5 3 7 3 5 2 3

EX. 6

Cm9

3 6 5 8 7 8 5 6 3

EX. 7

Cmaj9 C9 Cm9

3 3 3 7 4 5 7 3 2 3 3 3 3 3 7 8 10 7 8 6 8 8 8 8 8 7 8 10 6 8 6 8 8

EX. 8

Cmaj9

7 4 5 7 3

EX. 9

Cm9

7 8 10 6 8 6 6 8 5 6 8 5 7 8 10 6 8

**Examples 2 and 3** show the notes in a C9 arpeggio and C minor 9 (Cm9) arpeggio, respectively. For now, it suffices to be aware that in a Cmaj9, the 3rd and 7th are E and B; in a C9, the 3rd and 7th are E and B $\flat$ ; and in a Cm9, the 3rd and 7th are E $\flat$  and B $\flat$ . In next month's Woodshed, we'll look at the mathematical construction of these chords and find out why a C9 chord sounds funky and a Cm9 chord sounds so sad and poignant.

In his ebook, Fossgreen suggests an important practice tip in passing: "Start at the top of the arpeggio." This is huge! Although numerous bass technique books deal with arpeggios, most of them miss a crucial point: They are weighted toward starting on the root of a chord and playing up the arpeggio. What's the problem with that? We miss half of the good stuff—starting at the top of the arpeggio and descending. As bassists, we are so fixated on the root (which is a good thing), that we miss many hip options when we play a bass line or solo (which is a bad thing). **Examples 4–6** show grooves that climb up and down Cmaj9, C9, and Cm9 arpeggios. Play them a comfortable tempo to get their shapes under your fingers—as well as their sounds in your ear.

**Example 7** turns the world upside down by starting the arpeggio at the top. Play the C in bar 1, then jump up to the 9th (D) on beat one of bar 2. Play down the arpeggio, and land on the root–7th–root combination to bring things back home. Check out the tablature and you'll see that this arpeggio lends itself to raking down the strings.

**Example 8** avoids starting on the root, instead beginning at the top of the Cmaj9 chord and playing



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## 5 Books To Take You Higher (Or Lower)

**Vade Mecum for the Double Bass** by George Vance [Carl Fischer Music]

This modern classical bass method uses an organic approach to the fingerboard, taking the student from the lowest depths of the instrument to its highest peaks with a logical, easy-to-grasp system.

**Chord Studies for Electric Bass** by Rich Appleman & Joseph Viola [Berklee Press Publications]

Due to the lack of good bass material when I was starting out back in the dark ages of music pedagogy, I practiced out of the bass-friendly book *Chord Studies for Trombone*. Since the '80s, the folks at Berklee have offered this arpeggio practice method specifically for bass.

**Melodic Arpeggios & Triad Combining for Bass** by John Patitucci [David Gage String Instruments]

Patitucci's ebook is available only in Kindle format, but it offers a valuable insight into how he thinks about practicing arpeggios. iPad users can access Kindle books using the iPad Kindle app.

**Play Da Bass** by Josh Fossgreen [joshfossgreen.com]

It's short, it's free, it's got some nice licks and good ideas—grab it!

**Bass Arpeggio Finder** by Chad Johnson [Hal Leonard]

This complete guide catalogues 1,300 bass arpeggios using fingerboard charts and standard notation. Johnson explains arpeggio construction clearly and shows inversions and many possible fingering possibilities through the use of fingerboard diagrams.

down the arpeggio. This is a giant step more advanced than Ex. 7. To be completely comfortable starting on a note other than the root, you have to slowly train yourself to see and hear the *Cmaj9*, and immediately grab the *D* on top. Once you can play the *Cmaj9* flawlessly from the top down, move on to *C9* and *Cm9*. Then play the three arpeggios through 12 keys all over the bass.

Now that you have shaken your case of “root-itis,” you can begin experimenting with lines that start on the upper partials of a chord. **Example 9** is a broken arpeggio line starting on the 9th of the *Cm9* chord. You can adjust the 3rds and 7ths and play this pattern over a *Cmaj9* and *C9*.

Invent some of your own lines starting on the 9th. You'll find that this exercise will give you a new awareness of the real sound of major, minor, and dominant chords. Don't lose track of the root of the chord, and certainly don't abandon your function as a bassist when you're trying these techniques with other musicians. Next month, we'll explore more chords from the top down. Until then, bottoms up! **BP**

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BASSER INSTINCTS

# Untethered Souls, Academics & Language Learning

BY JEFF BERLIN

**TO PARAPHRASE A BIT ON DAVID LETTERMAN'S** old NBC show, "Letters, I get letters!" Thanks folks for your many written queries—let's get right to them.

Preston pleads, "Help! I practice daily and go over the material for my gig, but when I get onstage and play, I become my own worst critic. Inevitably, I begin unraveling mentally; I miss notes, mess up the groove, or my plucking hand will start shaking uncontrollably. I have to find out a way to get out of my own head when I play in public. Do you have any advice on how I can strengthen my mental execution in performance?"

Hi, Preston. There is a fantastic book on this subject written by Michael Singer called *The Untethered Soul*. This book deals *exactly* with your complaints about the critical voice in your head. You might be interested to know that everyone has the same complaints about the voice in their head to some degree. Lecturer Eckhart Tolle goes further and refers to this inner voice as a true mental illness—an illness that we all share, by the way. Regarding your gigs, just know that nobody is listening that carefully when you play. Even when your hand is shaking, people who are listening don't even notice. Gigs are usually places where people come for musical entertainment, not musical enlightenment. The audience simply doesn't notice things like shaking hands or some confusion in playing. Even the great jazz vibraphonist Gary Burton says the majority of his audience doesn't need to know about music to know what he is doing. So, be of good cheer. No one can tell what is happening with you. Also, you are not your thoughts, but are separate from them. To show you this, let's try an experiment: In your mind, say the word "car" five times slowly. Now in your mind, say the word "house" five times slowly. Afterward, did you notice there was the part that said those words, and a part that watched? Be in the part that watches as often as you can. This will invalidate the mental messages you are telling to yourself. Read Singer and you will learn more about this.

Peter writes, "If I don't like jazz, can't I study other kinds of music to learn how to play?"

Thanks for writing, Peter. My suggestion is that you not avoid learning jazz. As an academic music, jazz is the best music to study. Learning it doesn't necessarily mean you will become a jazzier. It means you will improve as a player through working on perfect musical content. The goal of all players is to play what you hear inside of yourself. If you cannot play what you hear inside, then you either don't know where the notes are on the neck, or you don't know what the notes are. There can be no other explanation for a lack of playing ability, which makes the solution to this problem easy: Learn music on your bass. Why is jazz study so effective? Because it is pure content applied directly to your instrument. There is no better way to improve—not in academics. I wish you luck with this.

Dragan says, "Most people would agree with the notion that learning music is like learning a language. However, being a linguist by profession, I would amend that statement with one very important missing detail: Learning music, as a player, is like learning a *foreign* language. Which makes the learn-by-exposure/immersion/imitation approach much less effective."

Hello Dragan. Imitating and being exposed to our language since infancy (English in my case) is a true-life experience. But bass players should remember that we all follow this experience with 12 years of academic training in reading and writing. If we learn our language academically in school, and if bass players feel that music is a language, then shouldn't music be learned in school the same way a language is learned? "What's good for the goose is good for the gander." I learned that metaphor in school. Come to think of it, I learned what *metaphor* meant in school, as well. Your foreign language reference never occurred to me, so thank you for the new point of regard. I would like to give this some thought. **BP**



## *i* INFO

Jeff Berlin has toured and recorded with such artists as Frank Zappa, Bill Bruford, Allan Holdsworth, and Billy Cobham. He has released eight solo albums and is music director at the Players School of Music in Clearwater, Florida. You can reach Jeff with questions or comments on this column at [talkingbassnotes@yahoo.com](mailto:talkingbassnotes@yahoo.com). [playerschool.com](http://playerschool.com)

JEFF BERLIN



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# TRANSCRIPTION

## “Drive-In Saturday” By David Bowie

### Trevor Bolder’s Complete Bass Line

BY BRIAN FOX

PHOTOGRAPH BY ITV / REXUSA

#### ON MAY 21, 2013, THE BASS WORLD LOST ONE OF ITS UNSUNG

stylists in Trevor Bolder, who succumbed to pancreatic cancer at the age of 62. Born June 9th, 1950, in Hull, England, Bolder grew up in a musical household, taking up cornet and trombone in school and picking up bass guitar in his early teens. Bolder teamed up with fellow Hullensian Mick Ronson shortly after the guitarist began backing David Bowie as a member of the Hype in 1970, and by 1971, Bolder had replaced longtime Bowie collaborator Tony Visconti on bass in Bowie’s band. Bolder, Ronson, and drummer Woody Woodmansey would form the core of the Bowie backing band known as the Spiders From Mars, appearing on *Hunky Dory* [1971], *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* [1972], and *Aladdin Sane* [1973]. Bolder and Ronson went on to contribute to Bowie’s 1973 *Pin Ups* collection of cover songs, but by that time relations between the singer and his band had soured. Bolder recorded two albums with Ronson before replacing John Wetton in the seminal progressive rock band Uriah Heep in 1976, remaining with the band through 2013.

First inspired by the Beatles to pick up the bass guitar, Bolder soon gravitated toward the heavier sounds of hard rock. “I saw Jack [Bruce] with Cream, and he just blew me away with his energy,” Bolder told *BASS PLAYER* in October ’08. “I got *Fresh Cream* [1966] and sat for hours in my bedroom with my bass and amp, playing along. Jack has a great melodic sense from his cello background, but he also lays it down with a heavy feel. I’d been a solo cornet player in brass bands, so I could relate. Through Jack I developed my style, which was to push it a bit further—and probably play a little more than I should have!”

Fortified by a strong R&B foundation from gigging around East Yorkshire, Bolder rose to the challenge of backing Bowie, as much in the Thin White Duke’s flamboyant proto-glam style as his spur-of-the-moment creative impulses. “It was a challenge,” Bolder told *BP*, “first because it was lighter music than I had been used to playing. And to teach you his songs, he’d come in with

an acoustic guitar and say, ‘Okay, play along.’ As a result, a lot of the bass lines had to come off the top of my head. We’d get maybe two run-throughs and then we did the take. We had a bit of rehearsal

time for *Ziggy Stardust*, but for much of *Aladdin Sane*, it was the same on-the-spot situation.”

As *Aladdin Sane* producer Ken Scott recounts in his memoir, *Abbey Road To Ziggy Stardust* [Alfred Music Publishing, 2012], “We started recording tracks, some of which would eventually become part of *Aladdin Sane*, in New York City at RCA Studios,” amid a North American tour.

“I loved ‘Drive-In Saturday,’” writes Scott. “It feels more American to me than anything else on the album, probably as a result of David’s time in the States.” Released in April 1973 as the second single from *Aladdin Sane* (following “The Jean Genie” in November 1972), “Drive-In Saturday” does indeed bear the hallmark of 1950s American doo-wop, with its 12/8 rhythmic lilt and “doo-doo-wah” backing vocal tracks. But on bass, Bolder takes a decidedly bolder tack.

After calmly setting the pace in the 2-bar intro, Bolder wastes no time asserting his presence once the verse begins at Letter **A**, juxtaposing held notes at the front of the bar with rapid-fire 16ths toward the back. As the I–vi–V progression of the verse gives way to the IV chord at the start of the prechorus (Letter **B**), Bolder begins to reach into the higher registers (bar 12), building intensity

#### STORYTELLING

*Before performing a live version of “Drive-In Saturday” back in 1999—with longtime bassist Gail Ann Dorsey re-interpreting Trevor Bolder’s original bass line—David Bowie offered this background on the song. See and hear for yourself on Bowie’s VH1 Storytellers CD and DVD [EMI, 2009].*

“‘Drive-In Saturday’ was written as a follow-up single for Mott the Hoople, who’d had some considerable success with another song I had written for them called ‘All the Young Dudes.’ Well, they—in their own wisdom—decided the time had come to write their own single, so it was given back to me. I was so annoyed that one night in Florida, I shaved my eyebrows off. You think I’m joking—I actually am not joking. I got very drunk and shaved my eyebrows off, I was so annoyed they didn’t do this song.”





From left: Trevor Bolder, David Bowie, Woody Woodmansey, and Mick Ronson

at bar 15 with a crescendo into the key change at the chorus, Letter **C**. Here, Bolder seamlessly injects further rhythmic and melodic flair into his bass line with a syncopated run in bar 20, and by ditching the root in favor of the *D* chord's 3rd at bar 22. By contrasting the density of his fills with big, held notes in the descending line in bars 25–26, Bolder gives his subhooks just the right amount of breathing room.

On "Drive-In Saturday," Trevor Bolder proves himself every

bit the master as John Deacon with Queen or Dee Murray with Elton John, two contemporaries who also expertly infused melodic runs and rhythmic nuance into settings that would overpower a lesser player. While we mourn the loss of a great talent, we celebrate the lasting legacy of "Weird," as Bowie famously referred to Bolder in "Ziggy Stardust." Weird? Perhaps. Wonderful? Without a doubt. Now let's plug in and pay tribute to a fallen giant of rock bass. **BP**



David Bowie, *Aladdin Sane* [RCA, 1973]

## "Drive-In Saturday" By David Bowie

Transcription by Brian Fox

♩. = 68

E A F#m E

12

2 2 2 2 2 4 1 2 2 2 2 2 3 4 4 4 4 3 4 2 2 2

6 A F#m E

2 7 9 7 9 9 7 7 7 7 7 7 4 4 2 4 4 4 6 4 4 6 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 9 9 9 9

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39 B C D G F E Am Am7/G D/F# G

43 C G/B D C D G F E Am Am7/G D/F# G

47 C C/B Am Am7/G D/F# Dsus/E D C D G F E Am

51 D/F# G C G/B D C D G F E Am Am7/G

55 D/F# G C C/B Am Am7/G D/F# Dsus/E C C/B Am Am7/G D/F# Dsus/E D 4x

66 C C/B Am Am7/G D/F# Dsus/E D C C/B Am Am7/G D/F# Dsus/E D

70 C C/B Am Am7/G D/F# Dsus/E D C C/B Am Am7/G D/F# Dsus/E D Fade

Handwritten transcription of bass lines with fingerings (1-5) and accidentals (sharps, naturals) for measures 39 through 70. The notation includes a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The bass lines are written on a single staff with a bass clef. The chords are indicated above the staff.





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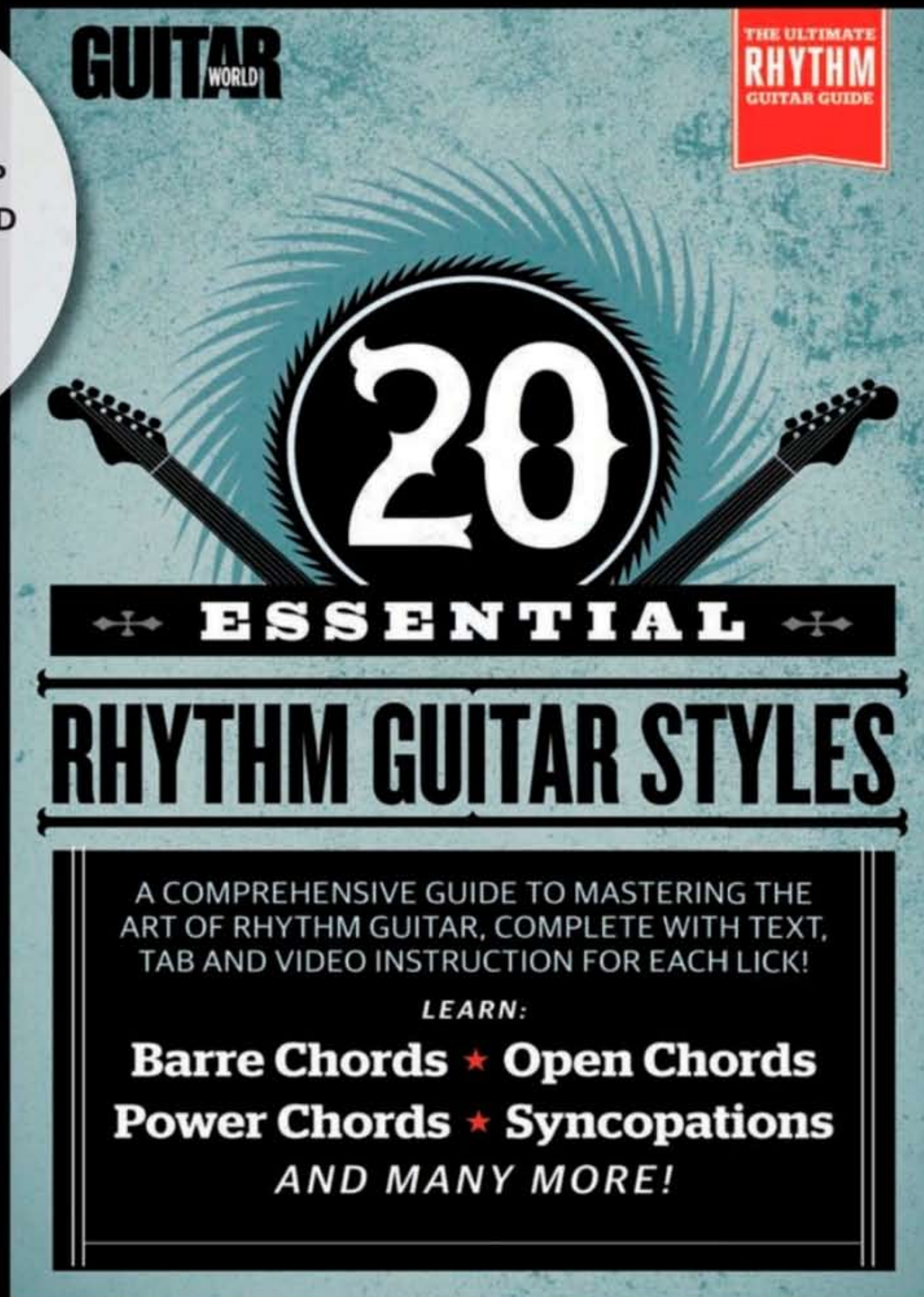


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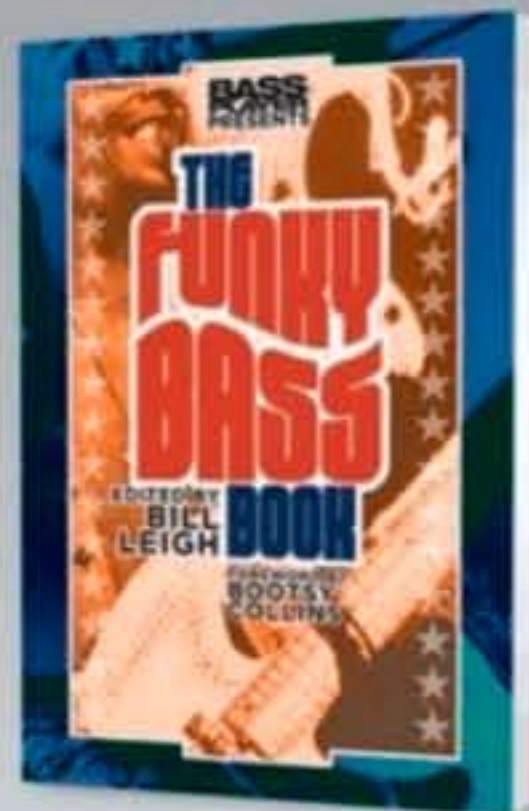
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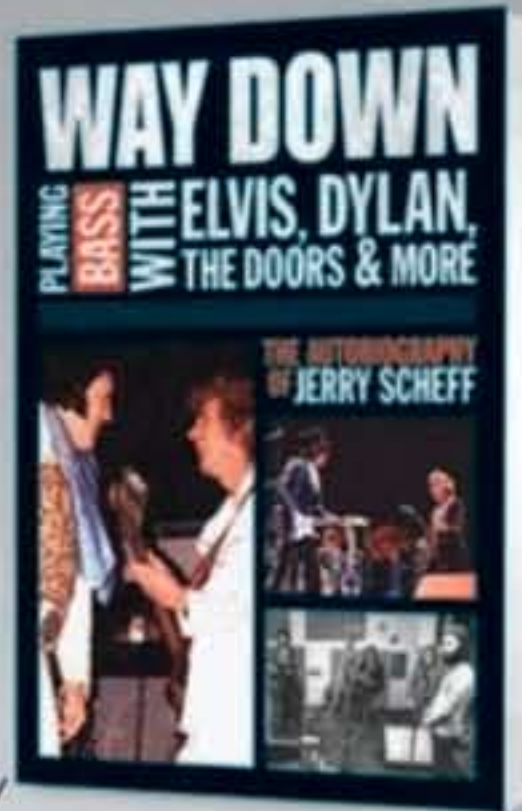
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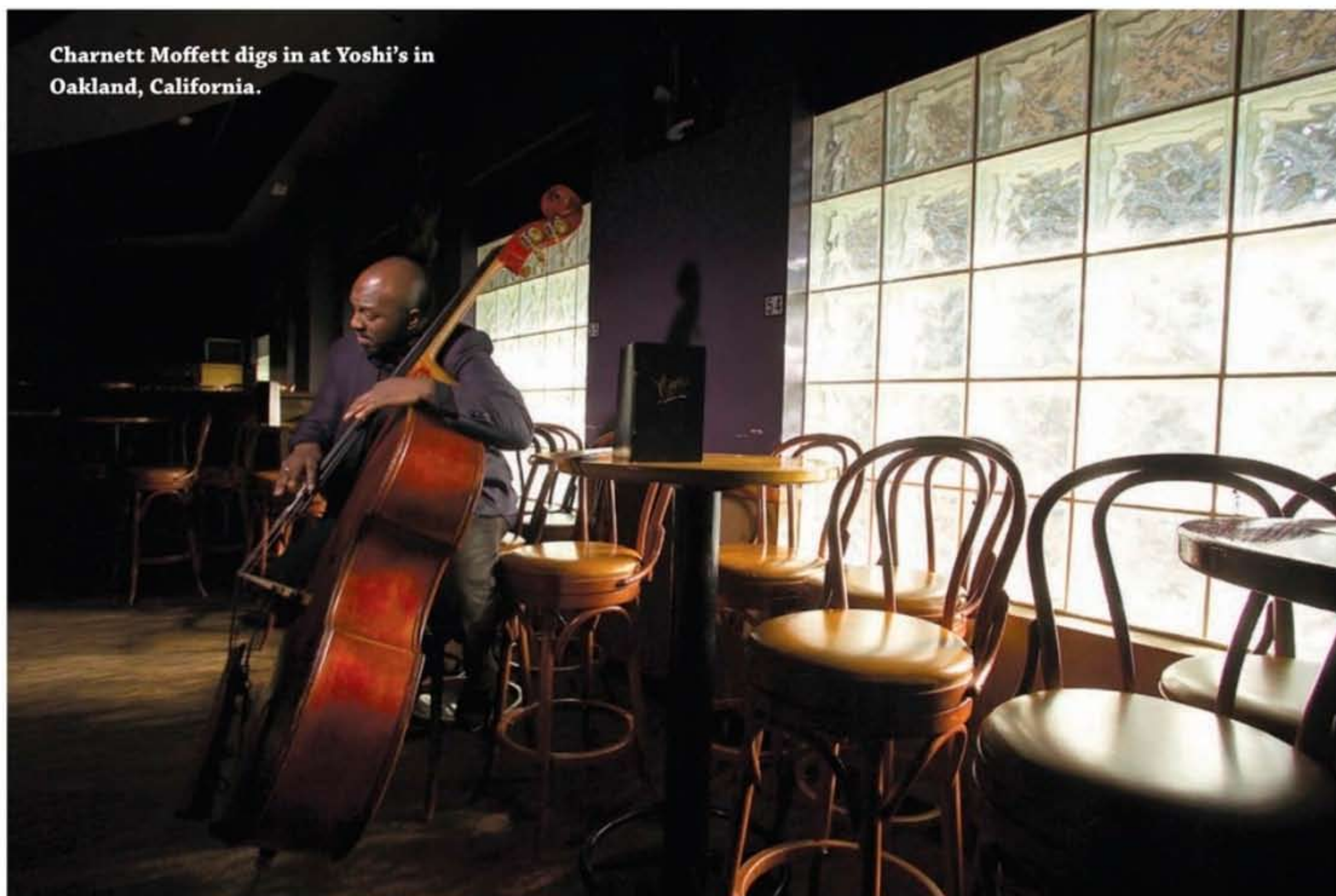
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Over the past 20-plus years with *BASS PLAYER*, Art Director and photographer Paul Haggard has accumulated a shelf full of broken cameras and some dusty memories. He will recount some over the next few columns until either he can't remember any more, or they fail to be interesting—whichever comes first.

Charnett Moffett digs in at Yoshi's in Oakland, California.



## OUTTAKES

Photograph from May 2005

**BACK WHEN I WAS A KID, I WOULD SIT AND LISTEN TO** music on vinyl and, without the distractions of the adult world, enjoy the luxury of being able to become absorbed within the song and imagine hearing it being played live. My mind would wander, and I would fantasize further about being in a room one-on-one with the musician, as if he or she has stopped by my home and was giving me a personal performance. C'mon, it's not so weird—you have had this fantasy yourself. Admit it. *Hey, Jaco, pass the bowl of chips; and while you're at it, play "Birdland" again. I never get tired of that riff.*

Well lo and behold, time, as it does well, has flown, and it is now 2013 and I have spent the last couple of decades trying to learn to be a photographer. Someday I might succeed at making a good photograph, but if I ever do or not, I've been having a lot of fun trying all this time. Given that I love music and playing, it is only natural that my work involves this industry, where all manner of artistic avenues intersect to form beautiful sounds and images, thoughts and ideas, philosophies and cultures. It is a place where some of the most profound art is made, but it doesn't happen without hard work and dedication.

It is impossible to become great without years of practice and countless

hours of immersion. There are lots of musicians, but only a small percentage stand out. There is a huge difference between hearing the performance of a virtuoso and someone, well, less than one. These are the few who get the spotlight, the big tours, the promotional vehicle, and, of course, the media photo op. This is where I come in.

I don't want to say that I have a routine for my photo sessions, because that would imply lax creativity, but there are requisite criteria necessary to fulfill for magazine work. I need to make a setup for the cover, and then when that is safely in the can, I let the mood take the subject and me wherever it will—but last and most important, I insist that the subject do what he or she does best: play.

And here is when my adolescent dreams come true. No, not *those* adolescent dreams. Get your mind out of the gutter.

After many years, I frequently find myself in a room alone with a great player, and he or she *does* give me the gift of a personal performance. And I relish these gifts as my little reward for having parlayed what was essentially a great enthusiasm and respect for music into a satisfying creative outlet. My heartfelt gratitude goes to all those who have played for me. —PAUL HAGGARD



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